The Belle of Bowling Green

By
AMELIA E. BARR

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To My Friend

WARREN SNYDER

A Bookman and a Lover of Books

This Novel is Dedicated

CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

I MONDAY'S DAUGHTERS 3

II THE SPRING OF LIFE 30

III A SWEETNESS MORE DESIRED THAN SPRING ... 61

IV INTRODUCES MR. ST. ANGE 81

V A CHAIN OF CAUSES 115

VI THE MIRACLE OF LOVE 149

VII THE INCIDENT OF MARRIAGE 194

VIII THE ROSE OF RENUNCIATION 226

IX THE REPROOF OF THE SWORD 252

X THE STAR OF PEACE 296

XI AFTERWARD 321

Prologue

O shades of respectable Vans!
  O Livingstons, Kennedys, Jays!
Lend me your names to conjure with,
  And bring back the fine old days—
When the trade and wealth of the city
  Lay snugly the rivers between,
And the homes of its merchant princes,
  Were built round the Bowling Green.
        Here's to the homes that are past!
          Here's to the men that have been!
        Here's to the heart of New York,
          That beats on the Bowling Green!

Here's to the men who could meet
  Mockers and doubters, with smiles;
And planning for centuries hence,
  Lay out their city by miles.
It has spread far out to the North,
  It has spread to the East and the West,
Though the men who saw it in dreams,
  Now sleep in old Trinity's breast.
        Here's to the homes that are past!
          Here's to the men that have been!
        Here's to the heart of New York,
          That beats on the Bowling Green!

PROLOGUE

And here's to the maids of the past!
  (They were beautiful maids we know,)
That strolled in the Battery Park,
  In the years of the Long Ago.
And though maids of to-day are fair,
  (No lovelier ever have been)
They are proud to be called by the names
  Of the Belles of the Bowling Green.
    Here's to the men of the past!
      Here's to the maids that have been!
    Here's to the heart of New York,
      That beats on the Bowling Green!

The Belle of Bowling Green

CHAPTER
ONE

Monday's Daughters

EVERY city has some locality to which its heroic and civic memories especially cling; and this locality in the city of New York is the historic acre of the Bowling Green. With that spot it has been throughout its existence, in some way or other, unfailingly linked; and its mingled story of camp and court and domestic life ought to make the Bowling Green to the citizens of New York all that the Palladium was to the citizens of ancient Troy. For as the Palladium held in one hand a pike, and in the other hand a distaff and spindle, so also, the story of the Bowling Green is one of the pike and the distaff. It has felt the tread of fighting men, and the light feet of happy maidens; and though showing a front of cannon, has lain for nearly three centuries at the open seaward door of the city, like a green hearthstone of welcome.

In the closing years of the eighteenth, and the early years of the nineteenth century, the Bowling Green was in a large measure surrounded by the stately homes of the most honourable and wealthy citizens; and though this class, before the war of 1812, had began to move slowly northward, it was some years later a very aristocratic quarter, especially favoured by the rich families of Dutch extraction, who, having dwelt for many generations somewhere around the Fort and the Bowling Green, were not easily induced to relinquish their homes in a locality so familiar and so dear to them.

Thus for nearly one hundred and forty years there had been Bloommaerts living in the old Beaver Path, and in Bloommaert's Valley, or Broad Street, and when Judge Gerardus Bloommaert, in 1790, built himself a handsome dwelling, he desired no finer site for it than the Bowling Green. It was a lofty, roomy house of red brick, without extraneous ornament, but realising in its interior arrangements and furnishings the highest ideals of household comfort and elegance.

Sapphira, his only daughter, a girl of eighteen years old, was, however, its chief charm and attraction. No painting on all its walls could rival her living beauty; and many a young citizen found the road to the Custom House the road of his desire. For was there not always the hope that he might catch a glimpse of the lovely Sapphira at the window of her home? Or meet her walking on the Mall, or the Battery, and perhaps, if very fortunate, get a smile or a word from her in passing.

All knew that they could give themselves good reasons for their devotions; they did not bow to an unworthy idol. Sapphira Bloommaert had to perfection every mystery and beauty of the flesh—dark, lambent eyes, hardly more lambent than the luminous face lighted up by the spirit behind it;

nut-brown hair, with brows and long eyelashes of a still darker shade; a vivid complexion; an exquisite mouth; a tall, erect, slender form with a rather proud carriage, and movements that were naturally of superb dignity: "the airs of a queen," as her cousin Annette said. But Sapphira had no consciousness in this attitude; it was as natural as breathing to her; and was the result of a perfectly harmonious physical and moral beauty, developed under circumstances of love and happiness. All her life days had been full of content; she looked as if she had been born smiling.

This was exactly what her grandmother Bloommaert said to her one morning, and that with some irritation; for the elder woman was anxious about many people and many things, and Sapphira's expression of pleasant contentment was not the kind of sympathy that worry finds soothing.

"In trouble is the city, Sapphira, and over that bit of hair-work you sit smiling, as if in Paradise we were. I think, indeed, you were born smiling."

"The time of tears is not yet, grandmother; when it comes, I shall weep—like other women."

"Weep! Yes, yes; but one thing remember—deliverance comes never through tears. Look at Cornelia Desbrosses; dying she is, with her own tears poisoned."

"I am sorry for Cornelia; I wish that she had no cause to weep," and with these words she did not smile. It had suddenly struck her that perhaps it was not right or kind to be happy when there was so much fear and anxiety in her native city. The idea was new and painful; she rose and went with it to the solitude of her own room; and her mother after silently watching her exit, said:

"She is so gentle, so easily moved—was it worth while?"

"You think so? Give Sapphira a motive strong enough, and so firm she will be—so impossible to move. Oh, yes, Carlita, I know!"

"Indeed, mother, she obeys as readily as a little child. Our will is her will. She bends to it just like the leaves of that tree to the wind."

"Very good! but there may come a day when to your will she will not bend; when a rod of finely tempered steel will be more pliant in your hand than her wish or will. We shall see. She is a very child yet, but times are coming—are come—that will turn children quickly into men and women. Our Gerardus, where is he?"

"He left home rather earlier than usual. He was sure there was important news." Mrs. Bloommaert spoke coldly. Her mother-in-law always set her temper on edge with the claim vibrating through the two words "our Gerardus." "There is so much talk and nothing comes of it but annoyance to ourselves," she continued, "the cry has been war for five years. It comes not."

"It is here. At the street corners I saw the bill-man pasting up news of it. In every one's mouth I heard it. Alive was the air with the word *war;* and standing in groups, men were talking together in that passion of anger that means war, war, and nothing but war."

"The blood of New York is always boiling, mother. When Gerardus comes he will tell us if it be war. I shall not be sorry if it is. When one has been waiting for a blow five long years, it is a relief to have it fall. Who is to blame? The administration, or the people?"

"As well may you ask whether it is the fiddle, or the fiddlestick, that makes the tune."

"At any rate we shall give England a good fight. Our men are not cowards."

"Carlita, all men would be cowards—if they durst."

"Mother!"

"If they durst disobey the nobler instincts which make the lower ones face their duty."

"Oh!"

"Carlita, you have no ideas about humanity."

"I think mother I, at least, understand my husband and sons—as for Sapphira——"

"More difficult she will be—and more interesting. Peter and Christopher are all Dutch; they that run may read them, but in Sapphira the Dutch and French are discreetly mingled. She has tithed your French ancestors, Carlita—take good heed of her."

"They were of noble strain."

"Surely, that is well known. Now I must go home, for I know that Annette is already afraid, and there is the dinner to order. Pigeons do not fly into the mouth ready roasted, and Commenia is getting old. She is lazy, too; but so! The year goes round and somehow we do not find it all bad."

As she finished speaking, Sapphira came hastily into the room. Her face was flushed, her eyes flashing, and she cried out with unrestrained emotion: "Mother! Mother! We must put out our flags! All the houses on the Green are flagged! Kouba has them ready. He will help me. And you too, mother? Certainly you will help? Kouba says we are going to fight England again! I am so proud! I am so happy! Come, come, mother!"

"My dear one, wait a little. Your father will be here soon, and——"

"Oh, no, no! Father may be in court. He is likely with the mayor. Perhaps he is talking to the people. We can not wait. We must put out the flags—the old one that has seen battle, and the new one that is to see it."

"But Sapphira——"

"I have the flags ready, mother. Come quickly," and without further parley she ran with fleet, headlong steps to the upper rooms of the house. Madame, her grandmother, smiled knowingly at her daughter-in-law.

"The will that is your will?" she asked; "where is it? You can see for yourself, Carlita."

"The news seems to be true at last. You had better wait for Gerardus, mother. He will tell us all about it."

"The news will find me out in Nassau Street."

"Commenia can manage without you for one day."

"There are strawberries to preserve. I like to manage my affairs myself. I have my own way, and some other way does not please me."

"Well, then, I shall go to Sapphira. My hands are itching for the flags. I am sure you understand, mother."

"Understand! If it comes to that, I made up my mind many years ago about those English tyrants—and I have not to make it over. I think about them and their ways exactly as I did when I sent my dear Peter with Joris Van Heemskirk's troops to fight them. Gerardus was but a boy then—ten years old only—but he cried to go with his father. God be with us! Wives and mothers don't forget, *O wee! O wee!*"

Her voice softened, she looked wistfully backward and, with outstretched hand, waved her daughter-in-law upstairs. Then she opened for herself the wide, front entrance. The door was heavy, but it swung easily to her firm grip. And yet she was in the seventy-fourth year of her life days.

With a slow but imperious step she took the road to her own home. She was not afraid of the crowd, nor of the enthusiasm that moved it. At every turn she was recognised and saluted, for Madame Bloommaert was part and parcel of the honour of the city, and her bright, handsome face with its coal-black eyes and eyebrows, and snow-white hair lying like mist upon its brown temples, was a familiar sight to old and young. She was rather small of stature, but so disdainfully erect that she gave the impression of being a tall woman—an illusion aided by the buoyancy of her temper and the definite character of her movements.

Her home was on lower Nassau Street between Beaver and Marketfield. It had been her residence for fifty years, and was as perfectly Dutch as herself in its character. Nothing in the street, however, was more interesting than this human habitation. It appeared to have created for itself a sort of soul, so instinct with personality was it. A large garden surrounded it, though its space had been slowly curtailed as land in the vicinity became valuable; yet there was still room enough for some fine shrubbery, a little grass plot, beds of flowers, strawberry and other vines, and the deep, cool well, with its antique shed full of bright pewter dishes.

The house itself was of red brick, mellow and warm, and soft to the eyes with the rains and sunshine of half a century; and nothing could be finer than its front, sending up sharp points to the sky, with a little boat weathercock on the tallest point boxing about in the wind. Over the wide casements a sweetbrier climbed, and nodded its tiny flower; and the veranda, cunningly carved along the bottom railing in an open leaf pattern, was a perfect bower of Virginia creeper.

She opened the garden gate, and its mingled perfumes made her sigh with pleasure. Such boxwood borders, such gay, sweet flowers, such brick walks laid in zig-zag pattern, and shaded by elm and maple trees are not to be found in New York city now, but to madame they were only the beautiful frame of her daily life. She cast her eyes down to see if the walk had been swept, and then looked up at the house as if it were a friend. The flag she loved, the flag under which her young husband had died fighting for liberty, was floating from her window. She stood still and gazed at it. Without words it spoke to her, and without words she answered its claim. In a moment she had accepted whatever of trial or triumph it might bring her.

She went forward more hastily, but, ere she reached the entrance, a very pretty girl came running to meet her. "Have you heard the news, grandmother?" she cried. "Are you not very happy? What did Sapphira say? And Aunt Carlita?—and uncle?—and all of them?"

Madame was unable to answer her questions. She clasped her hand firmly, and went with her into the house. Straight to the main living room she went, an apartment in which the dearest portion of her household gods were enshrined; massive silver services on a richly carved sideboard; semi-lucent china in the corner cupboard; three pictures of Teniers that one of her husband's ancestors had bought from the hands of the great painter himself; and chairs of antique workmanship that had crossed the ocean with Samuel Bloommaert in 1629 when he bought Zwanendael, the Valley of the Swans. The wide, open fireplace of this room was in itself a picture.

The deep cavity at the back and the abutting jambs were coloured a vivid scarlet, with a wash made from iron dust; the hearthstone was white as snow with pipeclay, and in front of the heavy brass irons was a tall blue and white jar with dragons for handles, holding a bunch of red roses, mingled with green asparagus branches. The broad chimney piece above this home picture had also its distinctive charm. It shone with silver candlesticks, their snuffers, and little trays. It kept the silver posset pan that had made the baby's food half a century ago; the christening cups of her son Gerardus and her daughter Elsie; and two beautiful lacquered tea-caddies from India and China.

Opposite the fireplace, at the end of the room, there was a long table black with age and heavy with Nuremburg carving; but it was on a small round one which stood by an open window that a dinner service for two persons was very prettily laid. Madame sat down in a chair near it, and Annette took off her scarf and bonnet and long gloves, and chattered volubly as she did so:

"I know you would like our flag to be out as soon as the rest, grandmother, and the Yates' flag was flying, and the Vanderlyns', and I had hard work to get ours flying before the Moores' and the Rivingtons'. I thought the whole city had gone mad, and I sent Mink and Bass to find the reason out. They stopped so long! and when they came back, they said it was because we are going to fight England again. How men do love to fight, grandmother!"

"When for their liberty and their homes men fight they do well, do they not?"

"If you had heard Peter Smith talking to a little crowd at our very gate, you would think men found the reason for their existence in a gun or a sword. He said we should whip England in about six weeks, and——"

"That is enough, Annette. The sort of rubbish that Peter talks and simpletons believe I know. We shall win our fight, no doubt of that; but in six weeks! No, it may as likely be six years."

"Grandmother! Six years! And will there be no balls, and suppers, and no lovers for six years? Of course, all the young men who are to be noticed will prefer fighting to anything else; and what shall I do for a lover, grandmother?"

"There is always Jose Westervelt."

"He will not do at all. He is too troublesome. He thinks I ought not to dance with any one but him; actually he objects to my speaking to some people, or even looking at them. It is too uncomfortable. I do not like tyranny—no American girl does."

"So you rebelled. But then, do you expect to catch fish without wetting yourself?"

"It has been done." She was putting on her grandmother's feet the cloth slippers she usually wore in the house, and as she rose she perceived with a smile the delicious odour of the roasted pigeons which a negro slave was just bringing to the table.

"I told Commenia to roast them, grandmother. I knew you would want something nice when you got back."

"Before the fire did she roast them?"

"Yes—on skewers, and basted them with fresh butter. I found enough peas on the vines, and I pulled and shelled them myself, for it was next to impossible to keep the blacks off the streets."

"Thank you, dear one."

"I have had such a happy year, grandmother, and now, I suppose, all our gaieties will be ended."

"Come, come, there will be more gaieties than ever. I am sure that the Battery will be put in fighting trim; then the Bowling Green, with soldiers, will be alive. What will follow? Drills and parades, and what not; and in all the houses round about the Green the women will make idols of the men in uniform. And to be sure they will show their adoration by meat offerings and drink offerings; ceremonies, Annette, which generally end in dancing and love-making."

"You notice everything, grandmother."

"I have been young and now I am old; but love never gets a day older. What love was in the beginning, he is now, and ever shall be. These pigeons are very good. You said you had some at the Radcliffes' yesterday—what kind of a dinner did they give?"

"It was a good dinner, but not a dinner to be asked out to; you and I often have a better one—and there was no dancing, only cards and games—and Jose Westervelt."

"Poor Jose!"

"Grandmother, he is so magisterial. He sets up his opinions as if they were a golden image; and I am not the girl to fall down before them."

"He is a distinguished mathematician already."

"And looks it: besides he knows no more of dancing than a Hindoo knows of skating. Also, since he came back from England, he is so cold and positive in his views, and so stiff and rigid in his London-made clothes, that I cannot endure him. Did you see Sapphira, grandmother?"

"Yes. With some hair work she was busy—a finger ring, or brooch or some such trifle. There will be other work soon, I think. In the last war we had to make all our own clothing and most of our household necessities. The last war! Oh, Annette, dear one, I lost everything in the last war!"

"But you are now a rich woman, grandmother."

"I mean not that. I lost your grandfather; he was everything to me. There was money, yes; and there was property; but all in a bad way then. Now; well, it is a little different."

"However did you manage?"

"I worked and hoped and helped myself and others, and left the rest to God. While I slept He made things to grow and prosper. And when this war is over we shall have settled our standing among the nations beyond all dispute, and New York will stride forward as if she wore the seven-leagued boots."

"Then, grandmother, you will build a fine house past Trinity Church—a good deal past it—perhaps half a mile, or even a mile, and we shall have a carriage of our own and be among the quality."

"I shall never leave this house, Annette. But I tell you, my dear one—you shall go to Washington every season. If your uncle and aunt Bloommaert go there, that will be sufficient; if not, I have friends who will see to it. Sapphira grows wonderfully handsome."

"And I, grandmother?"

"You have your own beauty. You need not to envy any one. Now I am tired and I will go to my room. I want to take some better counsel than my own."

"May I not go to see Sapphira, grandmother? I want to see her very much."

"You may not go to-day. Listen; the constant tramp of feet and the noise of men shouting and gathering grows louder. Stay in your home."

"It is very tiresome! Men are always quarrelling about something. What is the use of governments if they can't prevent war? Any one can settle a quarrel by fighting over it. I do not see what good fighting does. The drums parading round will give us headaches, and the men will go swaggering from one day to another after them. I am in a passion at President Madison—just too when summer is here, and we were going to the Springs, and I was sure to have had an enchanting time."

"Thou little good-for-nothing! Hold thy foolish tongue! If our men are going to fight it is for thy liberty and thy honour and thy happiness. Sit still an hour and think of that."

She shut the door when she had spoken these words, and then went, a little wearily, upstairs; but it any one had seen her half an hour afterwards sitting with closed eyes and clasped hands asleep in the large chair that stood by her bedside, they would have said, "She has been satisfied." For though she looked much older when asleep, her face then showed nothing but that sacred peace and refinement which comes only through a constant idea of God's care and presence.

Annette stood still until she heard her grandmother's door close; then, after a moment or two of indecision, she took from under the sofa-cushion a book, and stood it up before her with a comical air of judgment.

"It is all your fault, you unlucky 'Children of The Abbey,'" she said sternly. "If I had been able to get rid of you, I should have gone with grandmother to Uncle Gerard's house this morning; and, considering the news, we should certainly have remained there all day. And as grandmother says, 'if the pot boils, it always boils over on the Bowling Green.' I ought to have been where I could see and hear all that was going on. I think Sapphira might have sent for me! People are so selfish, and affairs always work so contrary. If I try to be unselfish nothing good comes of it—to me; and if I am reasonably selfish then I am sure to suffer for it. Grandfather de Vries is right; whenever I go to see him, he always mumbles to me: 'see now, love others well, but thyself most of all.' Grandfather de Vries is a wise man—every one says so—and he tells me to love myself best of all. Well, I shall have no company this afternoon but these silly 'Children of The Abbey.' They are as distractingly absurd as they can be, but I want to know whether they get married or not."

She sought this information with great apparent interest, yet ever as she turned the fascinating leaves, she let the book drop down a minute while she wondered "what was going on on the Bowling Green." For she had that keen impression of "something missed" which frequently and mockingly informs a person in whom selfishness is ingrained, unconscious, hereditary.

And her premonition was more than true. Her uncle at that very hour was standing on the topmost step of the flight leading to his house door, and there was a crowd of young men before him—a crowd drunk with its own passionate enthusiasm—who would not be satisfied until he had spoken. His wife and his daughter stood at his right hand, and at his left his son Christopher held aloft the torn and stained colours that had floated above "Bloommaert's Men" through the heroic days of the War for Independence. Shout after shout greeted his appearance, and when there was a moment's pause, a beautiful youth stepped forward and called out:

"Speak to us, judge. It is your words we are waiting for." His hat was in his hand, and his bare head, crowned with close, clustering curls, was lifted to the judge. For one moment his eyes sought out Sapphira, and she caught the glance, and it went to her heart like a ray of sunshine. Yet it was into her father's face she smiled as she gently touched his arm. Then he spoke as if a burning coal had been laid on his lips, and the very air felt as if set on fire by his words:

"My neighbours, and my fellow citizens!" he cried, "I have hitherto been bitterly against this war with England; but now, I am for it. With all my heart and soul, with all my body, with every shilling of my estate I am for it. I have always been a true and consistent Federalist. But now, there are no Federalists! there are no Republicans! We are all Americans! Dutch and English and French and Scotch, all are to-day Americans! America is the mother of us all. She has nursed us at her breast. She has made us free from all ancient tyrannies. She has given us homes and wives and children, filled our granaries with the finest of the wheat, and set before us the commerce of the whole earth. Shall we not love her? Shall we not defend her when she is insulted and wronged and threatened?"

A roar of enthusiastic assent answered these questions.

"If we must fight we will strike no soft blows in battle. We will give our enemy and the whole world this lesson—that no foreign warships can safely come blustering and pillaging our coasts. New York is to be defended, and New

Yorkers are the men to defend their native city. Will you do it?"

He was answered by a shout of affirmation.

"To the last gun?"

"Yes."

"To the last man?"

"Yes! Yes! You will stand with us, Bloommaert?"

"Living or dead I will stand with you." Then he took reverently in his hands the faded glorious rag that Christopher Bloommaert held.

"Look," he said, in a voice as tender as a woman's—"look at the flag that never waved over a coward, the flag to which we lifted our eyes when all was dark, and saw victory in its stars. It is a flag made for free men; will you ever let England—ever let any enemy—take it from you?"

"We will die for it!"

"No, you will live for it! You will carry it from victory to victory and fly it in the face of all the world—the flag of a free country—the flag of men that will have nothing else, and nothing less—than absolute liberty and absolute independence." As he spoke these words he lifted the old banner to his lips, and then held it out to the people.

It was an act of allegiance that embraced every soul present, and was followed by a moment of silence that throbbed with emotion; then the young man who had spoken for the company looked expressively at his comrades, and they turned northward to the city, their hearts burning with a steady fervour of loyalty, and their faces full of that dauntless hope which of its own energy fulfils itself. Quiet they could not long be, and when they reached the upper end of the Bowling Green, they began to sing; softly at first, but gradually gathering into a rattling vocal melody, the fiery passion of loyalty that filled their hearts:

"Here's to the Squire who goes to parade!
  Here's to the citizen soldier!
Here's to the merchant who fights for his trade
  Whom danger increasing makes bolder.
Here's to the lawyer, who leaving his bar
  Hastens where honour doth lead, Sir,
Changing his gown for the ensigns of war,
  The cause of his country to plead, Sir!
      Freedom appears,
      Every heart cheers,
And calls for the help of the brave Volunteers."

They sang the verse to the gay inspiring music of its old English song, and then gave lustily the cheers it called for. Their echo floated into the Bloommaert house, where the family were sitting down to their belated dinner; for this commonplace event was eagerly accepted as a relief. To eat and to drink, that would mean help and remission, and they had felt until feeling had become prostrating and oppressive.

Christopher made the first remark, and this was to quote the last line of the song, "Calls for the help of the brave Volunteers," asking after a short pause, "Is it not so, father?"

"Yes, Christopher. I suppose you will sail soon?"

"As soon as my new ship is ready. Peter is hurrying it forward. I am impatient to be off."

"Have you seen Peter to-day?" asked his mother.

"I saw him, but he was far too busy to talk. The hammers ring in his ship-yard from the first streak of dawn to the last glint of daylight. And now the demand for ships will be doubled."

"We shall want soldiers as well as sailors, Christopher," said the judge.

"That is true, father, and they will not be to beg nor to seek. This is a cause that knocks at every man's door. Leonard Murray is only one of many rich young men who are raising companies at their own expense."

"Then it *was* Leonard Murray with those men who were here an hour ago," said Mrs. Bloommaert. "I felt sure of it; but how much he has changed."

"In some ways, yes; in general he is just the same good fellow he has ever been. I had a few words with him early this morning, and he asked me to give his respectful remembrance to you and to Sapphira."

"It is four or five years since I saw him; where has he been?"

"He was at Yale nearly two years; then he went with a party as far west as the Mississippi, and down the river to New Orleans. He was staying with the Edward Livingstons until the rumours of war became so positive that he could not doubt their truth. Then he sailed from New Orleans to Norfolk, and so on to Washington. He reached Washington the very day of the proclamation of war and came so rapidly with the news that Mayor Clinton received it some hours before the official notice."

"And every hour is of the greatest importance now," said the judge. "Indeed, I have hardly time for my afternoon pipe, for I promised Mr. Clinton to meet him at four o'clock."

This information hurried the dinner a little, and Judge Bloommaert took his smoke very restlessly. After he had left the house, Christopher did not remain long. His ship's progress absorbed his thoughts, and he was not a talkative man. His ardour, his national pride, and his hatred of oppression were quite as potent factors with Christopher Bloommaert as with any patriot in New York, but the force they induced was a silent and concentrated one. On land he seemed to be rather a heavy man, slow in his movements and short in his speech; but the passion of his nature was only biding its opportunity, and those who had ever seen Christopher Bloommaert in action on his own deck knew for all time afterwards what miracles physical courage set on fire by patriotism and by personal interest combined might accomplish.

As he was leaving the room he held the open door in his hand a minute, and said: "Mother, do you know that Aaron Burr is back? He put up his sign in Nassau Street yesterday; I saw it this morning."

"Dear me, Chris! I hope he has come to help his country in her trouble—that would be only right."

"Help his country! Aaron Burr help! The man is dead."

"What do you mean, Chris? You said he was back, now you say he is dead."

"His honour is slain, and all men have lost faith in him. The man is dead."

He went away with these words, and Sapphira and her mother watched him out of sight. For some minutes they did not speak; then Mrs. Bloommaert asked: "Did you know Leonard Murray this morning, Sapphira?"

"Yes, mother. I knew him at once. I think that he passed the house twice yesterday. I was not quite sure then, but this morning I had not a moment's doubt. I wish Annette had been here. She will be very much disappointed."

"Annette would have spoiled everything. I am glad she was not here."

"Oh, mother!"

"Yes, she would. I will tell you how. When your father was called out, and took his stand on the topmost step, with Christopher and the flag on one side of him and you and I on the other side, do you think Annette would have been satisfied to stand with us? To be only one of a group? That is not Annette's idea of what is due to Annette."

"But what could she have done to alter it?"

"She would have said in her pretty, apologetic way that it was 'too bad to crowd us, and that any place was right for her,' and, before an answer was possible, she would have slipped past Christopher and seated herself on the second step at his feet. With her long curls and her white frock, and the blue snood in her hair, and the flag above her, she would have made a picture sufficiently lovely to have attracted and distracted every man present. There would have been but a poor, divided enthusiasm; and yet, Annette would have been so naturally and so innocently conspicuous that both your father and Christopher would have been unconscious of her small, selfish diplomacy."

"Annette is so pretty."

"And so vain of her beauty."

"That is true, but I fancy, mother, even the flowers are vain of their beauty. I have noticed often how the roses when in full bloom, sway and bend and put on languishing airs as if they knew they were sweet and lovely. And, to be sure, I have frequently when I have looked in a mirror been very glad I had a fair face and a good form."

"It was a very indiscreet, I may say a very wrong thing to do."

There was a short, penitential silence, and then Sapphira said:

"Though to-morrow is Sunday, may I go and see Annette early in the morning? I am sure both grandmother and Annette will like to know about father's speech."

"I can assure you that they know all about it already.

Kouba was not here to wait on your father when he left the house—why? Because he had gone as fast as possible to his old mistress with the news. Your grandmother gave him to your father when we were married, but it is only with his left hand that Kouba has served us. Your grandmother is still first; he goes to her with all the news of our house; he always has done so, he always will do so. Nassau Street already knows all—and more—that happened on the Bowling Green to-day."

Mrs. Bloommaert was quite correct in her opinion. Kouba had not even waited to eat his dinner, but had gone at once to "old mistress" with his own account of the event. And as madame was in her room asleep, Annette had been made the recipient of his views. She listened and she understood, without inquiry or dissent, where the information was truthful and where Kouba was embroidering the occurrence with his personal opinions. She accepted all apparently with equal faith, and then told the old man to "go to the kitchen and get his dinner and a bottle of 'Sopus beer."

"What an exciting event!" she exclaimed, "and Kouba is sure that Leonard Murray was the leader of the crowd. I believe it. It was Leonard I saw with the Clark boys half an hour ago. I dare say he is staying with them. I must go and tell grandmother."

She found madame awake, and quickly gave her Kouba's news. And it was really a little comfort to Annette to see her grandmother's disappointment. "So sorry am I that I came away," she said, "for a great deal I would not have missed that scene, Annette."

"No, indeed, grandmother! I think it will be very hard to sit here all evening and not know what is going on; shall we walk over to uncle's now?"

"Three hours after luck? No!"

"Kouba said the Clark boys were in the crowd; suppose I write and ask Mrs. Clark and Elsie and Sally to take tea with us. Then the men will come later, and we shall hear whatever there is to hear."

"The Clarks may not care to come."

"Yes they will. Let me write and ask them. We do want some one to talk to, grandmother."

Permission being at last obtained, Annette wrote one of her nicest notes and they sent it with a slave woman across the street to the Clarks' house. Mrs. Clark read it, laughed, and then called her daughter Sally.

"Sally," she said, "that little minx over the way has found out that Leonard Murray is here. Answer this invitation as pleasantly as possible, but tell her we cannot leave our own home to-night, as we have company."

"We might ask Annette here, mother."

"That is what she expects us to do."

"She is so pretty and cheerful."

"We will do without her beauty and her cheerfulness to-night."

"Joe is very fond of her."

"That is not the question; answer as I have told you."

But though Sally made the answer as kind as her own kind heart, nothing atoned to Annette for the fact that her little scheme—though one with a double aspect—had failed in both directions.

"They cannot come, grandmother, and they do not even ask us over there—they have company. I know who it is, for I am sure I saw Leonard Murray with the Clark boys an hour ago. But then——"

"What?"

"Sally is really ugly, and though Elsie has a pretty face, she is as dowdy as can be."

"And so much prettier is Annette de Vries—is that what you mean?"

"Yes, that is 'the because' of the slight."

"Of such a thing I would not think. 'The because' has nothing to do with us. And a very sweet girl is Sally Clark. Every one loves her."

"Don't scold me, grandmother. I have had already three disappointments. To-day is very unlucky."

"Then sit still and let it go by. Take the days as they come to you, child."

Annette did not immediately answer. She had gone to the window and was looking eagerly out. There was a sound of footsteps and of voices in spirited conversation. Listening and looking, she waited until voices and footsteps became faint in the distance. Then she turned to her grandmother with a shrug of satisfaction:

" I was right, as I generally am," she said. " The Clark boys, with Leonard Murray, have just gone by. Leonard is their company. What is he there for? He never used to care for those girls. Before he went to college ' from Sapphira to Sapphira was the limit of his way.' "

" Thou foolish one! He is none of thy affair."

" I do not care a button for Leonard Murray, but I think my cousin Sapphira does, and—and——"

What other reasons she had were not revealed. She stood at the window with an air of mortification, which, however, soon turned to one of pride and triumph; and then she tapped the glass merrily to her thoughts.

What was the girl dreaming of? Beauty's conquests? Social power? Love after her own heart? A marriage which would hand in her millennium? Alas, for the dreams of youth! Madame watched her in pitying silence—she knew how they would end.

CHAPTER TWO

The Spring of Life

TO the roll of the drum and the shrill call of the fife. the days went in a manner that was far from being disagreeable to the youthful population of New York. They enjoyed the thrill of a fear that was mingled with much excitement; and for a short period almost a license of political and patriotic temper prevailed. But to the more responsible citizens the news of war was far from welcome; so unwelcome, indeed, that only a few days before its proclamation, two petitions had been presented to the Senate signed by three hundred and ten citizens of New York, and by nearly all of the largest mercantile houses, praying that the embargo might be continued, "because they believed it would produce all the benefits of war without its calamities." Mr. Justice Bloommaert had been one of the signers of this petition, and when he recovered the equipoise of his usually calm nature, he was astonished and a little annoyed at the precipitancy with which he had publicly changed his opinions. It was in a measure unaccountable, and he searched all the outlying posts of his inmost soul to see where the weak point had been. It was not his wife's sarcasms or his daughter's more pronounced sympathy—he was used to their wordy warfare, and he was sure that no persuasive force in their armoury would have driven him to the ill-advised hastiness of his unpremeditated speech on the Bowling Green.

No, it was "the doing of that young fool, Leonard Murray." The judge had returned to his home that momentous Saturday in a passionate temper of hatred to England and her old tyrannies. He had been irritated by the lukewarmness and doleful prophecies of the majority of his friends and associates, and by the fact that every newspaper in the city was opposed to the war. And then, while his wife and daughter were stimulating his feverish mood of disapproval, he had suddenly been called to the front to stand by the opinions of others and to declare his own. He felt that somehow he had been tricked by circumstances, and his hand forced; and that young Leonard Murray was to blame for the whole affair. He had never liked the lad's father, and having been twice obliged to decide important cases against him, the elder Murray had shown his resentment in ways that had been both irritating and injurious. They had also been distinctly opposed in politics, and, moreover, in their youth had been rivals for the love of the pretty Carlita Duprey. Now, the son of this disagreeable man had apparently taken up his father's power to be at least unfavourable to him. He worked himself into a still, hot passion against the youth, and determined then and there to have nothing more to do with him.

Not that he intended to recede from any word he had uttered. He told himself instantly that he had only declared the truth, and that he would stand for, and by, every letter of his speech. But he wished that he had made that speech voluntarily, in some regularly called meeting, and not in response to a request voiced by young Leonard Murray. That was the sore point of the hurt, so that he hardly touched it, even in thought, but reverted at once to his speech, which struck him now as grandiloquent, turgid, and bombastic—not the kind of speech he would have made in the City Hall or at the Common Council by any means, and a tingling sense of chagrin answered this conviction. It was thoughts similar to these which surged with passionate strength through his mind as he stood on the following Wednesday afternoon on the steps of the City Hall. There had just been a public meeting in the park, called to approve the war measure, but it had been very scantily attended; and as the noisy crowd scattered, mainly up and down Broadway, he hardly knew whether he was glad or sorry for the failure. The uproarious conduct of the youth of the city offended him, and as a general thing the men of experience, of solid wealth and political power, had not answered the call for this meeting. For it was a Democratic call, and New York at that day was the very stronghold of the Federalists.

He stood a few minutes considering which streets would likely be the quietest road to his home, and seeing Broadway full of marching companies, all more or less musical and vociferous, he turned into Nassau Street, hoping to escape the cheers and attentions which his outspoken sympathy had brought him. For some distance it was comparatively quiet, but between Garden and Beaver streets he saw approaching what appeared to be a full company. They were stepping proudly to the music of "The President's March," and the narrow street appeared to Bloommaert's eyes to be full of their waving flags.

There was no outlet for his escape, and he assumed a dignity of bearing and a self-centred air that was usually both arms and armour to him. He hoped to pass unnoticed, but as the company approached it halted at command. His name was spoken. He lifted his eyes perforce and up flew every hat in respectful recognition. What could he do? Some of them were the very men he had addressed and aroused to enthusiasm on the previous Saturday. His noblest nature came to the front. He saluted them in return, wished them "God speed," and so passed on, but not before he had noticed the happy, triumphant face of their captain, Leonard Murray.

"That man again!" he muttered, and he could not dismiss "that man" from his memory during the rest of the walk. He passed his mother's house but did not enter it, for it was nearing his dinner hour, and he hoped in the society of his wife and daughter to find the restful equipoise he had lost during the morning's events. As he mounted the steps Sapphira threw open the door. Her face was radiant. She was the incarnation of pleasure.

" Father," she cried, " I am so glad that you have come home early. I have such good news. Mother and I have had such a great honour; you can't tell how happy we both feel."

Her visible joy was infectious, and Bloommaert flung his annoyance out of memory. " Come, now," he said cheerfully, " let us hear the good news. Who brought it to you? "

" Well, you would never guess, dear father, and I am going to let mother tell you."

They entered the dining room as she spoke, and its cool sweetness was like a breath of heaven. Mrs. Bloommaert rose with a smile.

" Gerardus, my dear! " she exclaimed, " you are earlier than I hoped. That is good. Now we shall have dinner."

" But Carlita, first the good news that Sapphira can hardly keep from me."

" Has she not told you? "

" No. She says you are to tell me."

" Well, then, it is very pleasant to her, and to me. Leonard Murray came here this morning just after you left. He had hoped to find you still at home—and he wanted us to select the uniform for his company. They are to fight under our colours, you see! He had many patterns of cloth with him, and we chose dark blue for the coats, and orange for the vest, and the head dress is to be dark blue cap with a rosette and streamers of red, white, and blue! The tricolour, my dear one—that was for my nation, and the blue and orange, that was for yours. Leonard was delighted. He is going to pay for the uniforms and support the company until the city puts it in active service. Then it will fight under our colours. Was it not kind and respectful of Leonard?"

"It was a piece of damned impertinence. I never heard of such impudence!"

"Father!"

"Gerardus, I am astonished at you!"

"The insolent puppy! What right had he? How dare he?"

"Mr. Justice, he only did what every young man of standing has done: the Clarksons, the Fairlies, the Westervelts, the Moores—every family of consideration has given its colours to some company or other. It is an honour, Mr. Justice, a great honour, and we are very proud of it. I told Leonard so."

"Leonard, indeed! It seems that you are already very familiar."

"Already! It is a long already. I have known the boy from the hour of his birth. His mother was my friend when we were both little girls. I was with his mother when she died. I promised her to be kind to Leonard whenever I had opportunity—the opportunity came this morning—I thought you would be pleased—and proud—but then, one never knows a man's real feelings—never! After last Saturday, too—it is inconceivable." Mrs. Bloommaert rose, and as her daughter followed her the judge was left alone with whatever answer he intended to make.

Generally, when an antagonist withdraws, the party left in possession of the ground feels a sense of victory. He tosses his head a little and triumphs in the fashion that best suits him. But Judge Bloomaert, standing with his doubled-up hand on his dining table, had a sinking sense of defeat. His large, dignified personality succumbed as the two slender slips of womanhood passed him—Carlita's haughty little head expressing a disdainful disapproval, and Sapphira giving him a look from eyes full of reproachful astonishment.

A natural instinct led him to sit down in order to consider his ways. "What the deuce!" he exclaimed. "Confound the fellow! What does it all mean?" Then his logical mind began to reflect, to deliberate, to weigh his own case as relentlessly as if it was the case of a stranger. The result was a decision in favour of his wife's and his daughter's position. From their standpoint he had been unreasonable and inconsistent. And he could put in no demurrer; for the only objection he was able to make lay in that covert dislike to the young man for which he was unable to give any reason that would not be more humiliating than simple submission.

He had reached this point when a negro slave, dressed from head to foot in spotless white linen, entered the room. He was carrying a platter containing a sirloin of roast beef, and the appetising odour, blended with the fragrance of the fresh peas,—boiled with the sprig of mint they call for,—stimulated the judge to the necessary action. He rose promptly and went to the sitting room in the rear. At the door he heard Sapphira and her mother talking, but they were instantly silent as he entered. That was a symptom he did not regard. He knew the tactics that were always successful, and with a smile and a courtly bow he offered his arm to Mrs. Bloommaert. The courtesy was made invincible by the glance that accompanied it—a glance that was explanation, apology, and admiration sent swiftly and indisputably to her heart. Words would have been halting and impotent in comparison, and they were ignored. The only ones spoken referred to the waiting meal. " Dinner is served, Carlita," and Carlita, with an answering glance of pardon and affection, proudly took the arm offered her. Ere they reached the door Sapphira was remembered, and her father stretched backward his hand for her clasp. Thus they entered the dining room together, and almost at the same moment they were joined by Christopher.

He was hot and sunburned but full of quiet satisfaction. He laid his arm across his mother's neck as he passed her, and taking a seat next to his sister clasped her little hand lovingly under the table.

With beaming eyes she acknowledged this token of his affection, and then touching a piece of pale blue ribbon tied through a buttonhole of his jacket, she asked:

"Pray, Chris, who is now your patron saint? Last year it was good St. Nicholas, and orange was all your cry. Why have you forsaken your old patron and changed your colours?"

Chris laughed a little. "I was caught unaware, Sapphira," he answered. "As I came up Cedar Street I saw Mary Selwyn cutting roses in Mr. Webster's garden. She had a rose at her throat, and a rose in her hair, and a basket of roses in her hand, and she was as sweet and as pretty as any rose that ever bloomed in all New York. And she said 'Good-morning, Captain Bloommaert; I hear you are soon for the ocean, and the enemy, and God be with you!' And I said, 'So soon now, Miss Selwyn, that this must be our good-bye, I think.' Then she lifted her scissors and cut from the ribbon round her neck the piece I am wearing. 'It is the full half,' she said, 'and I will keep the other half till you come home again happy and glorious.'"

"Well, then, it is your luck ribbon, Chris, and you must not change it," said Sapphira.

"In a very few minutes I was under great temptation to do so, Sapphira. I thought I would call on grandmother, but as I got near to her house I saw Walter Havens just leaving the gate. He was walking very proudly, and a flutter of red ribbon was on his head, and the next step showed me a flutter of white skirts behind the vines on the veranda. So I knew cousin Annette had been setting him up till he felt as if he had twenty hearts instead of only one."

"Did you speak to Annette after that observation?" asked his father.

"Why yes, sir. She saw me at once, and came running to open the gate. She had all her airs and graces about her and looked as radiant as the red ribbons she wore. She saw my blue ribbon immediately, and said scornfully, 'Pray now, whose favour is that affair tied in your buttonhole? It is a poor thing, Chris! Shall I not give you an inch or two of my solitaire?' and she lifted the housewife at her belt, and would have taken out her scissors. But I said, 'No, no, Miss de Vries, I'm not taking shares with Walter Havens. I'll just hold on to my 'poor thing.' I wonder how many rose ribbons you have given away this morning?'"

"Did she tell you how many, Chris?" asked Mrs. Bloommaert.

"She looked as if she might have given a hundred, but she kept her secret—you may trust Annette to keep anything that belongs to her—even her secrets; and most women give them away. Annette de Vries knows better."

"What did grandmother say?" asked Sapphira.

"I did not see her. She was in her room, asleep, Annette said. They are coming here this evening—with the Clarks, and perhaps others. You won't mind, mother, will you?"

"Indeed I shall be glad, if you wish it, Chris." For her heart had comprehended that his " good-bye " to Miss Selwyn meant that he was ready for sea. And it was Christopher's habit to slip away on some night, or early morning tide, when there was no one around to embarrass his orders. For he was not a man that either liked or needed the approbation and sympathies of others; as a rule, Christopher Bloommaert's approval was sufficient for him.

He was evidently full of business, and went away as soon as he had finished his dinner. The judge went with him, and Mrs. Bloomaert and her daughter, left alone, began instantly to discuss the subject of Christopher's departure.

" It is his way," said Mrs. Bloommaert. " The little party this evening is his farewell. We must make it as pleasant as possible. Your grandmother and Annette will be here, I suppose? "

"And the Clarks—Elsie and Sally, and Joe and Jack—and I suppose Leonard Murray will come with them," answered Sapphira.

" I should not wonder if Chris asked Miss Selwyn also."

" Very likely. She is a nice girl. I hope Chris did ask her. No one can help loving Mary Selwyn."

" What shall we do? What would Chris like best? You know, Sapphira, if any one knows."

" Let us have tea at six o'clock, then we can all go to the Battery to hear the music. There is a young moon, and it is warm enough to make the sea breezes welcome. Moffat's Military Band is to play from the portico of the flagstaff to-night, and we can have ices and cakes and wine served to us in the enclosure if we want them."

"You had better return home about nine o'clock, and I will have refreshments here ready for you. The large parlour can be somewhat cleared, Bose will bring his violin, and you might have a little dance. I don't believe father will mind. He knows Chris is ready to sail. I could see that."

"Oh, mother! Oh, dear mother, how good you are!"

The perparations for this rather impromptu gathering gave Mrs. Bloommaert very little trouble. Her servants were slaves, born in her own household, and whose share in all the family joy was certain and admitted. They entered heartily into the necessary arrangements, and in a short time the house had put on that air of festal confusion which the prospect of feasting and dancing entails.

Before six the guests began to arrive, and the eight or ten which Christopher's speech had suggested speedily became twenty. It appeared as if the young man had casually invited all of his acquaintances. But Mrs. Bloommaert made every one welcome, and the slight difficulty in seating them—the little crush and crowding—really induced a very spontaneous and unconstrained happiness. Then there was trouble in serving all rapidly enough, so Christopher, and Joe Westervelt and Willis Clark volunteered their services, and to these three Mrs. Bloommaert herself added Leonard Murray, whom she appointed her special aid; and thus the tea became a kind of parlour picnic. The windows were all open, the white curtains swaying gently in the breeze, and the scent of roses everywhere mingled with the delightful aromas of fine tea, and spiced bread, and fresh, ripe strawberries. Merry talk and happy laughter thrilled the warm air, and it was a joy in itself to watch so many bright, young faces, all keenly responsive to the pleasure of each other's presence.

Before seven o'clock they were ready for their walk on the Battery, and came trooping down the wide stairway, a brilliant company of lovely girls in their spencers of various coloured silks, and their pink or white frocks, their gipsy straw bonnets, and their low walking shoes fastened with silver or paste latchets. In twos and threes they sauntered along the lovely walk, and as the young moon rose, the band played sweetly from a boat on the water, and the waves broke gently against the wall of the embankment, their laughter and merry talk became lower and quieter. They rested on the benches, and made little confidences, and were very happy, though their joy was lulled and hushed, as if for this rare hour some friendly spirit had pressed gently down the soft pedal on life, and thus made its felicity more enchanting and more personal.

But if they forget the dance, their little feet had memories; they began to twitch and slip in and out, and grow restless; and Sapphira remembered the hour, though Leonard was charming, and the tale he was telling her, wonderful. "But then," she said, "mother is expecting us, and those at home must not be disappointed; for if there is anything grandmother likes, it is to watch the dance." So they went back to the Bloommaert house and found all ready and waiting for the cotillion. Upstairs with fleetest steps went the merry maidens, returning in less than ten minutes without their spencers, and with feet shod in satin sandals. The fiddles were twanging, and the prompter already advising gentlemen to choose their partners. Then the room became a living joy. The hearts of all beat with the twinkling steps of the dancers, and every one seized a measure of fleeting bliss, and for a breathing space in life forgot that they would ever grow weary or ever have to part.

Madame sat in her son's chair, flushed and smiling, her eyes wandering between her granddaughters. They were certainly the most beautiful women in the room, and when the judge came quietly to her side about ten o'clock she said to him: "Look once at Annette; at her feet are half the men; and as for Sapphira, I know not what to make of her—all of the men are her lovers, but some one was telling me it is Leonard Murray only that pleases her. I take leave to say they are a handsome couple, Gerardus."

Involuntarily he followed his mother's direction, and was forced to admit the truth of her remark. But it gave him an angry pain to do so, while the young man's expression of rapturous satisfaction provoked him beyond words. He had Sapphira's hand, they were treading a measure—not so much to the music of the violins as to the music in their own hearts. They had forgotten the limitations of life, they were in some rarer and diviner atmosphere. Step to step, with clasped hands, and eyes beaming into each other's face, they glided past him as if they were immortals moving to spheral music.

But beautiful as this vision of primal joy was, it roused no response in Judge Bloommaert's heart, and after a few words with madame he slipped away to the quiet of his room. He was wakeful and restless, and he lifted the papers in a case which had some personal interest for him, and soon became absorbed in their details. Yet he was aware of that inevitable decrease of mirth which follows its climax, and not ill-pleased to hear the breaking up of the gathering. The chattering of the girls resuming their spencers and walking shoes made him lay down his papers and go to the open window, and so he watched the dissolution of happiness; for the company parted, even at his own door, into small groups, some merely crossing to the other side of the Green, others going to Wall, State, Cedar, and Nassau streets. The later party seemed the larger contingent, and he heard the men of it, as they passed northward, begin to sing, "We be Three Poor Mariners." Christopher's voice rang out musically cheerful, and the father's heart swelled with love and pride, as he said tenderly, "God bless the boy." The prayer was an exorcism; anger and all evil fled at the words of blessing, so that when Mrs. Bloommaert, flushed and weary, came to him he was able to meet her with the sympathy she needed.

"Gerardus, my dear one," she said, "Chris bade me good-bye; I am sure of it. He laid his cheek against mine and whispered, 'A short farewell, mother!' and all I could say was 'God bless you, Chris!'"

"It was enough."

"When does he sail?"

"About four o'clock in the morning. He will go out on the tide-top, then."

"Where is he going?"

"To the Connecticut coast first, for supplies; easier got there than here; afterwards he goes nobody knows where, but as the Domine said last Sunday, he can't go where God is not."

"In that I trust. Did you notice the blue ribbon in his jacket?"

"Yes, I noticed."

"He seemed very fond of Mary to-night. I could not help seeing his devotion. Mother noticed it, also."

"What did mother say?"

"She said Mary was a good girl, of good stock, but she had not a dollar. I said, 'love was everything in marriage, and that money did not much matter.'"

"Hum—m—! It does no harm."

Then there was a short silence; madame was removing her lace-cap and collar, and the judge putting away his papers. Both were thinking of the same thing, and neither of them cared to introduce the subject. But the judge's patience was the better trained, and he calmly waited for the question he was sure would not be long delayed.

She rose as she asked it, went to her dressing table, and began to open her jewel box. " Did you notice Sapphira and Leonard Murray dancing? I thought I saw you watching them."

"Yes, I saw them, and to tell you just what I thought of the exhibition would only pain you, Carlita. Don't ask me."

" I am sure I don't know why I am not to ask you; every one was charmed with their grace. Even the elegant Mr. Washington Irving said their movements were 'the poetry of motion.' I thought it a very fine remark."

" Well, I suppose Mr. Washington Irving knows all about the poetry of motion. But if you will believe me, Carlita, there are some Dutchman in New York who do not worship Mr. Washington Irving."

Then there was another silence, and this time the judge broke it. " Carlita," he said, " what are you going all around the square to ask me? Speak out, wife."

" Well, Gerardus, any one can see that Leonard Murray is in love with Sapphira, and that Sapphira is not indifferent to him. I want to ask you if this marriage would be suitable, because if you are against it, their intimacy ought to be checked at once."

" How are you going to check it? Tell me that. We cannot shut her up in her room and set a watch over her, nor can we pack her off to Hong Kong or Timbuctoo—out of his way."

" Then you are against it? "

"Yes."

"But what for?"

"I am not ready to give you my reasons."

"I cannot imagine what they may be. Leonard is rich."

"Very. Colonel Rutgers told me his estate in land and houses and ready cash might be worth seven hundred thousand dollars. But, as you reminded me in regard to Mary Selwyn, money in matrimony does not much matter."

"I don't think it is as important as love; though, as you said, money does no harm to matrimony. But it is not only money, with Leonard. He is of good family."

"His great-grandfather was a Highland Scot, and James Murray, his father, cared for nothing but money. It was a bit of land here, and a dollar or two there—a hard man, both to friend and foe. I never liked him. We came to words often, and to blows once—that was about you, Carlita."

"You had no need to quarrel about me. From the first to last it has been you, Gerardus; you, and only you."

"Yet after we were engaged, James Murray asked you to marry him. No honourable man would have done such a thing."

"Have you not forgotten? The man is dead. Let his faults be left in silence."

"I do not like to see you so partial to his son."

"The son is his mother's son. He has qualities the very opposite of his father's. James Murray was a bigot and a miser. Leonard has the broadest and most tolerant views."

"There, you have said plenty. If there is any man not to be trusted, it is this broad, tolerant fellow. You remember Herman Strauss? He is that kind of character, brought up in the Middle Dutch Church, he married an Episcopalian, and without difficulty—being so broad—he went with her to Trinity. He praised the Democrats—Clintonian and Madisonian both—and yet he called himself a Federalist—thought that both were right in some ways. But like all men of this uncertain calibre, he had one or two trifling opinions, of no consequence whatever, either to himself or others, for whose sake he would lose money and friends, and even risk his life. It was only a question as to the brand of wine Mr. Jefferson drank, that made him insult Colonel Wilde, and in consequence fight a duel which has left him a cripple for life. So much for your man of wide sympathies and broad views! I like a man who has positive opinions and sticks to them. Yes, sticks to them, right or wrong! A man who sticks to his opinions will stick to his friends and his family. Good in everything! Good in every one! *Nonsense!* Such ideas lead to nowhere, and to nothing. The man that holds them I do not want to marry my daughter."

"Mrs. Clark says Leonard's moral character is beautiful."

"Mrs. Clark has known him about four days. And pray, what does Mrs. Clark, or you, or any other woman know about a man's moral character? Leonard Murray's ancestors have been for centuries restless, quarrelsome, fighting Highlandmen. He is not twenty-two yet, and he has been as far west and south as he could get, and only came home because there was likely to be some fighting on hand."

"But then, Gerardus—what have you behind you?"

"Centuries full of God-fearing Dutchmen—honest traders and peaceable burghers and scholarly domines."

"Oh, yes, and *Beggars of the Sea,* and men who fought with De Ruyter and Tromp, and wandered to the ends of the earth with Van Heemskirk for adventures, and came with the Englishman, Henry Hudson, here itself, and did a little good business with the poor Indians. And Gerardus, look at your own sons—Christopher is never at home but when he is at sea. He is happier in a ship than a house, and also he likes the ship to carry cutlasses and cannon. As for Peter, you know as well as I do that if he were not building ships he would be sailing them. He loves a ship better than a wife. He knows all about every ship he ever built—her length and breadth and speed, how much sail she can carry, how many men she requires to manage her, and he calls them by their names as if they were flesh and blood. Does Peter ever go to see a woman? No; he goes to see some ship or other. Now then, what influence have your honest traders and peaceable burghers had on your sons?"

"My dear Carlita, don't you see you are running away with yourself? You are preaching for my side, instead of your own. Chris and Peter are results, so is Leonard Murray. You can't put nature to the door, Carlita. Nature is more than nurture; all that our home and education and trading surroundings could do for boys, was done for Peter and Chris; but nature was ahead of us—she had put into them the wandering salt drops of adventure that stirred 'The Beggars,' and Tromp, and Van Heemskirk. I tell you truly, Carlita, that the breed is more than the pasture. As you know, the cuckoo lays her eggs in any bird's nest; it may be hatched among blackbirds or robins or thrushes, but it is always a cuckoo. And so we came back to my first position, that a man cannot deliver himself from his ancestors."

"I do not care, Gerardus, about ancestors; I look at Leonard just as he is to-day. And I wish you would tell me plainly what to do. Or will you, yourself, let Leonard know your mind on this subject? Perhaps that would be best."

"How can I speak to him? Can I refuse Sapphira until he asks for her? Can I go to him and say, 'Sir, I see that you admire my daughter, and I do not intend to let you marry her.' That would be offering Sapphira and myself for insult, and I could not complain if I got what I asked for."

"Is there anything I can do, seeing that you object so strongly to Leonard?"

"Yes, you can tell Sapphira how much I feel about such an alliance; you can show her the path of obedience and duty; and I expect you to do this much. I did not like mother's attitude about him at all, and I shall speak to her myself.

Sapphira must be made to feel that Leonard Murray is impossible."

"Well, Gerardus, I will speak to the poor little one. Oh, I am so sorry for her—she will feel it every way so much; but some fathers don't care, even if they turn a wedding into a funeral."

"Such words are not right, nor even true. I care for Sapphira's welfare above everything."

"Speak to mother; I wish you would. She will not refuse Leonard if he asks her for Annette. And Annette is already in love with him, I am not deceived in that. She was white with envy and jealously to-night."

"Is Annette in it?"

"Yes, and very much so, I think."

"Then I give up the case. No man can rule right against three or four women. I am going to sleep now, and I hope it may be a long time before I hear Leonard Murray's name again."

His hope had but a short existence. When he entered the breakfast room the following morning, the first thing he saw was Sapphira bending over a basket of green rushes, running over with white rosebuds. She turned to him a face full of delight.

"See, father," she cried. "Are they not lovely? Are they not sweet? If you kiss me, you will get their dew upon my lips."

He bent his head down to the fragrant flowers, and then asked: "Where did you get them so early in the morning?"

"Leonard Murray sent them. Let me pin this bud on the lapel of your coat."

"No," he said bitterly, pushing the white hand and the white flower away. "Go to your room, and take the flowers with you. I will not have them in any place where I can see them." Then a negro boy entering, he turned to him, and ordered his breakfast in a tone and manner that admitted of no delay nor dispute.

Sapphira had lifted her basket, but as soon as they were alone she asked: "Did you mean those unkind words, father?"

"Every one of them." He shuffled his coffee cup, let the sugar tongs fall, and then rang the bell in a passion. Yet he did not escape the pathetic look of astonished and wounded love in Sapphira's eyes as she left the room, with the basket of rosebuds clasped to her breast.

All day this vision haunted him. He wished to go home long before the usual hour, but that would have been a kind of submission. He said he had a headache, but it was really a heartache that distressed him, and during a large part of the day he was debating within himself how such an unhappy position had managed to subjugate him in so short a period of time. For, if any one a week previously had told him he could be controlled in all his tenderest feelings by a dislike apparently so unreasonable, he would have scoffed the idea away. He said frequently to himself the word "unreasonable," for that was the troublesome, exasperating sting of the temptation. The young man himself had done nothing that any fair or rational person would consider offensive—quite the contrary; and yet he was conscious of an antagonism that was something more than mere dislike—something, indeed, that might easily become hatred.

He had just admitted the word "hatred" to his consciousness as he reached the entrance of the Government House. The day had at last worn itself away, wearily enough, to the dinner hour. He might now go home and face whatever trouble he had evoked.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Justice."

He turned, and the light of a sudden idea flashed into his face, when he saw the man who had accosted him.

"Good-afternoon to you, Mr. Attorney Willis. I am just thinking about that case you defended a few days ago—the case of the man Gavazzio. A strange one, rather."

"A very strange case. He stabbed a man for no reason whatever; simply said he hated him, and seemed to think that feeling justification enough."

"See the Italian consul about him. I do not think he had broken any Italian law—that is, there are unwritten laws among these people, of a force quite as strong as the written code. We must take that fact into consideration with the sentence. The stabbed man is recovering, I hear?"

"Oh, yes; I will see the consul, as you desire it. Gavazzio most certainly thought we were interfering in his private affairs by arresting him."

"I have no doubt of it. Well, Mr. Attorney, the law is supreme, but we must not forget that the essence of the law is justice. Good-day, sir."

This incident, so spontaneous and so unconsidered, gave him a sense of satisfaction; he felt better for it, though he did not ask himself why, nor wherefore, in the matter. As he approached his home he saw Sapphira sitting at the window, her head bent over the work she was doing. She heard her father's step, she knew he was watching her, but she did not life her eyes, or give him the smile he expected. And when he entered the room she preserved the same attitude. He lifted a newspaper and began to read it; the servants brought in the dinner, and Mrs. Bloommaert also came and took her place at the table. She was not the usual Carlita at all, and the judge had a very depressing meal. As for Sapphira, she did not speak, unless in answer to some direct question regarding her food. She was pale and wretched-looking, and her eyes were red with weeping.

The judge ate his roast duck, and glanced at the two patient, silent, provoking women. They were making him miserable, and spoiling his food,—and he liked roast duck,—yet he did not know how to accuse them. Apparently they were perfectly innocent women, but unseen by mortal eyes they had the husband and father's heart in their little white hands, and were cruelly wounding it. When dinner was over Sapphira lifted her work and went to her room, and Mrs. Bloommaert, instead of sitting down for her usual chat with her husband while he smoked his pipe, walked restlessly about, putting silver and crystal away, and making a great pretence of being exceedingly interested in her investigations. He watched her silently until she was about to leave the room, then he said a little peremptorily, " Carlita, where are you going? What, by heaven and earth, is the matter with you! "

" You know what is the matter, Gerardus."

" I suppose the trouble is—Leonard Murray again. Confound the man! "

" Mr. Justice, you will please remember I am present. I think you behaved very unkindly to Sapphira this morning—and the poor little one has had such an unhappy day! my heart bleeds for her."

" Well, Carlita, I was too harsh, I will admit that; but I cannot tell Sapphira that I was wrong. It was all said and done in a moment—the sight of the flowers, and her joy in them—— "

" I know, Gerardus. I must confess to the same temper. When I came downstairs, and found you had gone without your proper breakfast, and that you had neither come upstairs to bid me good-bye, nor yet left any message for me, I was troubled. And I had a headache, and had to go to Sapphira's room to get her to come to the table, and the sight of her crying over those tiresome rosebuds made me angry; and I said more and worse than you did. I told her she ought to be ashamed to put her father out for any strange man; and that the fuss she was making over Leonard Murray was unmaidenly; and that the young man himself was far too free and demonstrative—oh, you know, Gerardus, what disagreeable things a fretful mother has the liberty to say to her child! And then, as if all this was not enough, Annette came in about eleven o'clock, and I told her Sapphira was not well, but she would go to her. And, of course, the first things she noticed were the white roses and Sapphira's trouble, and the little minx put two and two together in a moment. What do you think she said, Gerardus?"

"Pitied Sapphira, I suppose."

"She clapped her hands and cried out, 'Oh, you also got roses! White ones! Mine were pink—such lovely pink rosebuds! My colour is pink, you know.' And Sapphira answered, 'I thought it was blue,' but Annette dropped the subject at once and began to rave about Sapphira's swollen face and red eyes, and offered her a score of remedies—and so on. Sapphira could only suffer. You know she would have died rather than express either curiosity or annoyance. So, then, having given Sapphira the third and cruelest blow, she went tripping away, telling her 'to sleep, and not to dream of the handsome Leonard.' I generally go to Sapphira after a visit from Annette, and when I went to the poor child's room she was sobbing as if her heart would break. She told me, what Annette said, and cried the more, because she had been scolded both by you and me, and all for nothing."

"Poor little one!"

"Yes, indeed, Gerardus. These young hearts suffer. We have forgotten how little things seemed so great and so hard in our teens; but every heart is a fresh heart, and made that it may suffer, I think."

"I do not believe Annette got a basket of pink roses. I do not like Murray, but I think there are things he would not do. I saw a letter too—at the bottom of the basket. Oh, I do not believe Annette!"

"That is so. I told Sapphira it was a lie—oh, yes, I will say the word straight out, for I do think it was a lie. But she is a clever girl. She took in all sides of the question as quick as lightning. She knew they were from Leonard, and that there had been trouble, and she knew Sappha would never name pink roses to Leonard. She was safe enough in Sappha's pride, for, though she gave a positive impression that Leonard had sent her a basket of pink roses, she never said it was Leonard. If brought to examination, she would have pretended astonishment at Sapphira's inference, modestly refused the donor's name, and very likely added 'indeed, it was only a little jealousy, dearest Sapphira, that caused you to misunderstand me.' You see, I have known Annette all her life. She always manages to put Sapphira in the wrong; and at the same time look so sweetly innocent herself."

"What is to be done in this unhappy affair, Carlita? Sit here beside me, wife, and tell me. For you are a wise, kind woman, and you love us all."

"God knows, Gerardus! I have been thinking, thinking, thinking, through the livelong day, and what I say is this—let those things alone that you cannot manage. Because you cannot manage them, they make you angry; and you lose your self-respect, and then you lose your temper, and then, there is, God knows, what other loss of love and life and happiness. My father used to say—and my father was a good man, Gerardus."

"No better man ever lived than father Duprey."

"Well, then, he always said that birth, marriage, and death were God's part; and that marriage was the most so of all these three great events. For birth only gives the soul into the parent's charge for perhaps twenty years; and then all the rest of life is in the charge of the husband. As for death, then, it is God Himself that takes the charge. Let the young ones come and go; they may be fulfilling His will and way—if we enquire after His will and way."

"But if Murray speaks to me for Sapphira, what then?"

"There is the war. Tell him marriage is impossible until peace comes. War time is beset with the unexpected. In love affairs, time is everything. Speak fairly and kindly, and put off."

"Very good, Carlita. But if I should discover any reason why the marriage should not be, this time plan is not the thing. If a love affair ought to be broken off, it ought to be done at once—and if there should be any truth in those pink roses!"

"Well, Gerardus, if you are expecting trouble, you may leave Annette to make it. But my opinion is that Sapphira ought to be trusted. If you believe that God gave her into our charge for her sweet childhood and girlhood, can you not trust Him to order her wifehood and motherhood; and even in old age, to carry her and direct her way? If He foresaw her parents, also, He foresaw her husband. Are you not interfering too soon, and too much? After all, what can we do against destiny?"

"You are right, Carlita. Go now and comfort the poor child a little. You know what to say—both for yourself and for me."

Then Mrs. Bloommaert rose, smiling trustfully and happily, but at the door she turned. Her husband went toward her, and she toward him, and when they met, she kissed him with untranslatable affection. Again she was at the door, and the judge stood in the middle of the room watching her. As she slowly opened it, he made up his mind about something he had been pondering for a couple of weeks.

"Carlita," he said, "you may tell Sapphira that to-morrow I will buy her that grand pianoforte at Bailey & Stevens', that she was so delighted with."

"Oh, my dear Gerardus!"

"It is not white rosebuds, but yet she may like it." He could not help this little fling.

"There is nothing in all the world she wanted so much, though she never dreamed of possessing it."

"We shall see, dear! We shall see!"

In about half an hour the door opened gently, and there was a swift, light movement. Then Sappha was at his knees, and her face was against his breast, and he bent his head, and she threw her white arms around his neck and kissed him. There was no word spoken; and there was none needed—the kiss—the kneeling figure—the clasping arms, were the clearest of explanations, the surest of all promises. Verily "he that ruleth his spirit is stronger than he who taketh a city."

CHAPTER THREE

A Sweetness More Desired than Spring

IN this sort of veiled truce the new days came, but the inheritance of those other few days, following the declaration of war, was not disposed of. On the contrary, its influence continually increased; though Leonard received from Mrs. Bloommaert neither special favour nor special disregard. As for the judge, he preserved a grave courtesy, which the young man found it almost impossible either to warm, or to move; and it soon became obvious to Mrs. Bloommaert that her husband's frequent visits to his friend, General Bloomfield, were made in order to prevent all temptations to alter the polite reserve of his assumed manner.

But the lover's power is the poet's power. He can make love from all the common strings with which this world is strung. And this time was far from being common; it was thrilled through and through by rumours of war, of defeat and of victory, so that the sound of trumpets, and the march of fighting men were a constant obligato to the most trivial affairs. No one knew what great news any hour might bring. Expectation stood on tiptoe waiting for the incredible. This was not only the case in America. All over Christendom the war flags were flying, and the nations humbling themeselves before the great Napoleon. With an army of more than half a million men he was then on his way to invade the dominions of the Emperor of Russia, and at the same time he was waging war with England and Spain, in the Spanish peninsula. The greater part of the rest of Europe was subject to his control; and England was necessarily at war, not only with Napoleon, but with all the other powers of Europe, who were either allies or dependents of Napoleon. Under such circumstances it was hardly likely that she would send any greater force from her continental wars than she thought necessary to maintain her possessions in America. Thus, as yet, there was all the stir and enthusiasm of war, without any great fear of immediate danger.

Leonard came and went, as many other young men did, to the house of Bloommaert; and their talk was all of fighting. But the eyes have a language of their own; the hands speak, flowers and books and music, all were messengers of love, and did his high behests. Moreover, New York was even abnormally gay. She gave vent to her emotions in social delights and unlimited hospitality. Tea- and card-parties, assemblies or subscription balls, excursions up the river, visits to Ballston mineral springs, riding and driving, and the evening saunter on the Battery—when the moon shone, and the band played, and embryo heroes brought ices and made honest love—all these things were part and parcel of these early days of war, in eighteen hundred and twelve; and Leonard Murray and Sapphira Bloommaert met under such happy circumstances continually.

The Bowling Green was the heart of this festivity, for it was the headquarters of the military commanders; and all the colour and pomp of war centred there. Every morning Sappha awoke to the sound of martial music; and every hour of daylight the sidewalks were gay with the uniforms of the army and the militia. It was Annette's misfortune to live in Nassau Street; but then, as she said, " a great many officers found Nassau Street a convenient way to the Battery." Doubtless they did so, for her pretty face among the flowers and tantalising shrubbery of the house was an attraction worth going a little out of the way for. However, both Annette and Madame Bloommaert spent much time at the house on the Bowling Green; and no one was more interested in public affairs than the judge's mother. Her daughter-in-law had many other cares and duties; but the war to Madame Jonaca Bloommaert was the pivot on which all her interests hung.

She was sitting, one morning towards the end of July, eating breakfast with her granddaughter. There was a little breeze wandering about the old place, and madame wore her white Canton crape shawl, a sure sign that she intended to go to the Bowling Green. Well Annette had prepared herself for such a likely visit, and she looked with complacent satisfaction at her figured chintz frock, and her snow-white pelerine of the sheerest muslin.

"About that affair at St. Paul's Episcopal Church last Sunday, I want to ask your uncle Gerardus," said madame. "I take leave to say it was not respectable. I can hardly credit the tale—eh; what do you think?"

"It must be true, grandmother; I was at the dinner table yesterday when cousin Peter came in and told us."

"Told you? What then?"

"He said that after leaving church on Sunday morning, and seeing us safely to our gate, he went up Nassau Street and crossed the City Hall Park, intending to call on John Van Ambridge. Not finding him at home, he took the Broadway to the Bowling Green, and as he was passing St. Paul's Episcopal Church an artillery regiment marched out of the church, playing *Yankee Doodle;* and so up Broadway, to both the outspoken anger and outspoken pleasure of the crowd. Many men called on them to cease; others bid them go on, and there was a commotion that would likely have been much greater, if it had not been Sunday."

"What said Peter?"

"He did not like it; he said it never could have happened at the Middle Dutch Church, and so he laid all the blame on Episcopacy."

"And what said your uncle?"

"He did not like it either. He thought the officers should be reprimanded. What do you say, grandmother?"

"I like it."

Annette smiled with a pleasant anticipation. She rather enjoyed a difference of opinion between the household powers. There was generally some small advantage in one way or another as a result. Reconciliations were sure to follow, and reconciliations brought laxities and favours—not infrequently gifts. She did not forget Sappha's new piano—the white roses and the tear-stained face, and as a natural sequence—the piano.

As they took their way to the Bowling Green madame noticed an unusual quiet in the streets, but Annette, to whom the Bowling Green represented New York, thought everything very lively. The musical exit from St. John's supplied the conversation, or at least seasoned it with a just interesting acrimony, till the dinner hour arrived. The judge was always pleased to see his mother, and always placed her in his own seat at the table when she eat with them, and this loyal respect and kindness, though so often repeated, never failed to touch madame as if it was a new thing that very hour. So she spoke far more tolerantly than she intended, about the scene at St. John's, and expended her little store of wrath upon an ordinance which the Common Council had just passed, making it unlawful for any one but those in actual service to beat drums or play fifes on the streets, except under great restrictions as to time. Madame indignantly declared such a law to be "a restriction on the liberty of the individual;" and she reminded her son how much of a sinner he himself had been, when the Revolutionary War was beginning.

"You were then a lad of only ten years old, Gerardus, yet the drum was never out of your hands, unless you were playing the fife," she said.

"I am sorry to hear this, mother," he answered. "The suffering that has been caused by such exhibitions of boyish patriotism is beyond our counting. The healthy have been made sick, the sick have been made worse, and in many cases, undoubtedly, they have died in consequence of the perpetual noise. Latterly these bands have taken to beating drums incessantly before the house of any one thought to be opposed to the war, and the general distress has compelled householders to beseech the Town Council for its interference."

"An old woman am I," said madame, "but the noise never annoyed me."

"Mother, you are not an old woman, and you will never be old. If you see one hundred years, you will die young."

She put out her thin, brown hand towards her son at this compliment, and he laid his own all over it. Then she added a little defiantly: "More noise than ever we shall have in a day or two. Just nobody, is the Common Council. The new disease is noise, and the boys all have it."

"Well, then, mother, the law will make short work of it—there is a heavy fine and the watch-house for those who do not mind the law."

"Poor boys!"

"I think we have had enough of that subject," said Mrs. Bloommaert; "is there no other news, Gerardus?"

"Well, my friend General Bloomfield is to be relieved of his command here; so my pleasant evening smoke and chat with him will soon come to an end. I heard, also, that the company raised by Leonard Murray had joined Colonel Harsen's artillery regiment, and offered their services as a body to the governor, and that it has been accepted. Some parts of it will go to Staten Island, others to Bedloe's Island and the Narrows."

He did not raise his eyes as he made this statement, or he must have seen the face of his daughter flush and pale at his words. She understood from them that Leonard would leave New York, and she could not imagine how long his absence might be. Mrs. Bloommaert did not speak; but she looked curiously at the dropped countenance of her husband. In some dim, undefined way, she came in a moment to the conclusion that this bit of military movement had been effected by General Bloomfield, in order to please his friend. Annette shrugged her shoulders and said some one, or something, always carried off *her* friends. She wondered what she should do without Leonard—he was so obliging, so merry, so always on hand when she wanted him, and so discreetly absent when she would have felt him a nuisance. She went on in a pretty, complaining way, as if Leonard was her special friend, or even lover, and though all present looked at her with a mild astonishment, no one cared to contradict the position she had taken. Madame even endorsed it by her unconscious affectation of sympathy. "You have a trifle of eight or ten other admirers, child," she said; "and Leonard Murray is by no means unparagoned. A token give to him, and let him go; a little discipline, that will be good for him."

This discussion had given Sappha time for self-control, and Mrs. Bloommaert looked with admiration at her daughter. She had feared some scornful or passionate word, but the face of Sappha was as calm as that of a sleeping child. She had taken possession of herself completely; and she asked her mother for some delicacy she wanted, with an air of one only concerned about her dinner. For by a strong mental effort she had closed the door on Leonard for the time being: she loved him too well, and too nobly, to babble about her relations with him—especially with her cousin Annette.

She asked her father for no further information, and he was pleased at her reticence; so much so that he gently stroked her hair as he passed her seat in going out; and the smile she gave him in return made him thoroughly respect her. It was a time when it was considered a mark of refinement in a woman to weep readily; and if under the stress of any unusual joy or grief or disappointment she fainted away, she was thought to have done the right thing to prove her exquisite sensibility. But if Sapphira had fainted on hearing of her lover's departure, the judge would never have stroked her hair, and she would also have missed that comprehensive, kindling glance from her mother, which at once bid her be brave for the occasion, and assured her of sympathy.

But the weariest river finds the sea somewhere, and the time and the hour run through the longest day. There were visitors after dinner, and then tea-time came and went; and the judge prepared himself to see his mother and niece safely to their home.

"And, Carlita, my dear," he said, "I may not be home until late. There is to be a meeting at Tammany Hall to approve the war, and considering our conversation to-day at dinner, one thing about the call is worth telling you—it is 'recommended to citizens of forty-five years of age and upward.'"

Madame laughed and gave her long mitts an impatient jerk—"these greybeards of 'forty-five and upward' are going to talk very wisely, no doubt," she said; "but the young men it is, who will man the ships and the batteries, and the real fighting do."

"The old men will lead them, mother."

"Sixteen were you when you went to the front in the last war, Gerardus; and Aaron Burr, who was no older, if as old, carried messages between Arnold and Montgomery through the thick of the fight at Quebec; and when Montgomery fell, little Burr it was who caught his body and carried it out of the line of fire through a very rain of bullets—a boy, mind you!"

"Mother, I have divested myself of all community of feeling with the man called Aaron Burr, and of all interest whatever in his sayings and doings."

"There it is! However, the sayings and doings will talk for themselves some day. Come, let us be going. Carlita looks worn out with our chatter."

Carlita did not deny the imputation, and as soon as the echo of their footsteps had died away in the distance, she said, "Sappha, carry the candles into the other parlour. I want to lie down on the sofa. I want to be quiet and dark, and find out where I am, and what I am. The strain has been very hard. Nassau Street always leaves me feeling fit for nothing but sleep."

"And then to end it, that weary Aaron Burr controversy. Can't people let him alone?"

"No! When he did well, he heard it never; now they say he has done ill, he hears of it day in and day out."

So Sappha went to the best parlour, where the piano still stood open, with the new music scattered over it. She put it in order, and the very act brought her a restful, thoughtful mood. Then she closed the instrument, and drawing a comfortable chair before the window she sat down to commune with her own heart. If what her father had said concerning Leonard's company was correct—and she had no doubt of it—then it was almost certain Leonard would himself call and tell her. He might call that very night; she was finally sure he would call, and her ears took intent note of every sound, and of every coming footstep.

Very rarely are our hopes and wishes accomplished! But this hour was favourable to Sappha's love. In a very short time she heard the strong, quick steps she was waiting to hear; and her face grew luminous with pleasure, and a sweet smile made her little red mouth enchanting. She did not go to meet him—the front door stood wide open these summer evenings, and there was a distinct luxury in sitting still and waiting for the approach of happiness. It was approaching so surely, so swiftly, and as the steps came near, and more near, she heard in that scarcely broken silence the oracle of her heart.

He entered softly, with a grace half-mystical and half-sensuous; and without a word stood over her. Then she lifted her eyes, and he saw their bright light turn tender, and he stooped and laid his cheek against hers, and whispered: "Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me, Sappha? Speak, dearest! Speak quickly! Oh, speak kindly!"

And her soul flew to her lips, and there was no need of words. Love found a sweeter interpretation.

"Thy little white hand, give it to me."

She had no will to refuse it, almost of its own will it slipped between the two strong hands that held it fast. Then he found out those happy love words that are so glad that they dance as they burn; those words at once so simple and so wise, so gentle and so strong.

And the great marvel of love is ever this—the slenderness of the knowledge and experience which compels one human being to say to another, " I love you! " which compels souls to rush together, as if they were drawn by some such irresistible attraction as compels planets to follow their orbits. Both were so young and so happy that they made each other seem lovelier as they sat with clasped hands, speaking of Leonard's company and its destination.

" How shall I endure your absence, Leonard? I know not. You are my life, now, dear one," said Sappha.

" But, Sappha, my sweet, I shall be in your thoughts, as you in mine; and we shall not know that we are apart. Besides, it will be only for ninety days."

" Ah, but, Leonard, love reckons days for years, and every little absence is an age! The tedious hours will move heavily away, and every minute seem a lazy day."

" Where have you learned all this? "

" You taught me."

" Oh, love! love! love! How sweet you are! When I return, then you will be my wife. Let me speak to your father and mother to-night. Why should we wait? "

" Leonard, I have promised my father and mother that I will not engage myself to any one, until the war is over."

" But that was before this happy hour. Such a promise cannot now stand, darling."

" It cannot be broken. How could you ever trust me if I was false to the dear father and mother who love me so much? "

"But we are engaged, Sappha. No mere ceremony of asking consent can ever make us more truly one."

"Then, my love, be content with that knowledge."

"The war may last a lifetime."

"It may be over in a year—or less."

The love-light in her eyes, her tremulous smiles, her penetrative loveliness, her confident heart's still fervour, filled him with an inward gladness that was unspeakable. His eyes dilated with rapture; he felt as if he was walking on air, and breathing some diviner atmosphere. The joy of love had gone to his head like wine.

In a little while Mrs. Bloommaert came into the room, and though she was sleepy and distrait, she could not but notice the couple who stood up hand-in-hand to meet her. Sappha was eighteen years old, but her radiant face looked almost childlike in its innocent joyousness; and Leonard at her side was the incarnation of young manhood; endowed with strength and grace and beauty, and crowned with the glory of fortunate love.

Leonard wished her to understand, but she smiled away all explanations, and pretended a little worry over her long sleep, and the late hour; and there was nothing left for Leonard but to say "Good-night." They both went to the door with him, and when he was out of sight, the door was shut and the mother said, "I must have been asleep! Your father will be here soon, Sappha. You had better go to bed. I suppose Leonard is going with the men he raised."

"Yes, he is going."

"He ought to be glad to go. It is good for a young man to have some experiences. Well, dear one, the day is over; and you must be tired."

Then Sappha perceived that her mother did not wish to know authentically, what she understood clearly enough; and a little saddened by this want of sympathy, she went quietly into solitude with her joy.

The three months that followed this interview were filled with incident. New Yorkers needed no theatre; the war supplied every emotion of dismay and triumph of which the human heart is capable. "*On to Canada!*" had been the slogan at its commencement; and General Hull with over two thousand fine troops quickly took peaceable possession of the little village of Sandwich, on the Canadian shore. His first dispatches threw New York into a tumult of excitement and delight. The American flag was flying on both sides of the Niagara River, and from the grandiloquent proclamation Hull had made the Canadians, and his first dispatches, it really appeared as if Canada had fallen. But even while bells were ringing and cannons firing jubilates for this news, Hull himself had thrown out the white flag from his fort at Detroit, and surrendered the stronghold and all his forces without firing a gun. The anger and mortification of the people were in due season, however, turned into triumph; for if General Hull surrendered on the nineteenth of August, Captain Hull of the frigate *Constitution* on the tenth of August took the British man-of-war *Guerriere* on the coast of Newfoundland; and the news of this victory, which arrived in New York about the first of September, roused the wildest enthusiasm.

This circumstance indicates very well the progress of the war. The army operations on the Canadian frontier were everywhere disastrous to America; on the ocean her ships vindicated by constant brilliant victories the descent of her sailors from that great maritime power whose flag had braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze. There is not in all history a more splendid naval record than the United States made during these ninety days of alternate dismay and triumph. And no city felt these wonderful sea victories quite as New York did. Her great ship-yards on the East River had sent out the armed frigates and brigs, that were covering the nation, even in the eyes of her enemy, with a great and unexpected glory. The *Constitution!* the *President!* the *Essex!* the *United States!* these gallant ships had a kind of personality to New Yorkers. They had seen them grow to perfection in Christian Bergh's and Adam Brown's yards. They had stood godfathers at their christening, and they watched their valiant careers almost as a father watches his son's course to a glorious success.

On the fourth of September Sappha and Mrs. Bloommaert were in Greenwich Street shopping, when they suddenly heard a wild shout of joy. "The *Constitution!* the *Constitution!*" From mouth to mouth the two words flew like wild-fire. The whole city was roaring them. The bells clapped them out. The cannon sent them thundering over land and sea. Men meeting, though strangers, clasped hands; and women threw themselves into each other's arms, weeping. Was there feeling enough left for a maid to be lovelorn or melancholy? Not in Sappha's case. She gave her whole heart to rejoice with her country first, and then proudly remembered the dear youth who must at that moment be rejoicing with her.

Letters from him came more frequently than she had dared to hope. Some one available as a messenger was frequently at the Narrows fort, and Leonard never missed an opportunity. There was no restriction on this correspondence by her father and mother, though at the beginning of it the judge strongly advised restriction.

"Written words cannot be denied or rubbed out, Carlita," he said. "I know what young men are. Suppose Leonard should show Sappha's letters to some companion."

"Suppose an impossibility, Gerardus."

"Not so. A man in love is always a vain man, if his love is returned. He has conquered, and he puts on all the airs of a victor. He usually wants some one to admire and envy him, and a love letter is a visible proof of his prowess among women. I would not allow Sappha to write."

"Then you are in the wrong, my dear one. Nothing is better for a lover than a course of love letters. It is the finest education for marriage."

"They say so many extravagant things."

"Very well. That is good. They get used to saying fine things, then they feel them, and 'tis no harm at all for a lover to write down his mistress 'an angel.' He may treat her the better for it, all their lives together."

"So! so! Take thy own foolish way, wife. I do not forget thy dear little love notes—and ever the few leaves of sweet brier in them. I can smell it yet."

So Sappha had her love letters, and she also wrote them. Leonard's were like himself, frankly outspoken, full of extravagancy, both in love and war. "He loved her as never man loved before;" and she saw the words shine on the paper, and believed in them with all her soul. "He longed for those unspeakable English tyrants to come within reach of their guns, they would be sunk twenty fathoms deep in no time—then, then, then, oh, then he would fly to her, as a bird to its nest!" Love and glory mingled thus, until love took entire possession; then the conclusion was a passionate exploiting of that yearning word "*why?*" "*Why* could they not be married when he returned? *Why* should they wait? *Why* did she not think as he did? *Why* consider the war at all? *Why* let that old tyrant of a motherland called England interfere in their happiness? *Why* let anything? Or anybody?" There had been little parties of visitors at the Narrows, "*Why* had she not persuaded her father and mother to sail so far with her? *Why,* in short, did she not understand that life was dreadfully dull in the fort, and that a sight of her would be heaven to him? *Why? Why? Why* did she not love him as wildly and fondly and eternally as he loved her?"

All this exaggeration was the most beautiful truth to Sapphira. She adored her lover for the very prodigality of his pleas and protestations. It was right and proper that lovers should suffer all the pangs of separation; she was rather proud of Leonard's wailing and complaining; and careful not to comfort it too much, by comparing it with her own. Indeed she rather affected the style of a sweet little mentor, bound to remind him that he must love honour, even before herself. And she so blended their own hopes and happiness with domestic and public affairs as to make her letters all that a daily paper might be to a man shut up in prison, or in a fort in a wilderness. Leonard saw through them, the New York he loved, the busy, hopeful people, talking, trading, singing, smoking, loving, living through every sense they had; and he felt with the keenest delight all Sappha's sweet self-disparagements and compunctions for her own happiness and good fortune in being beloved by him.

"I cannot tell you, my own dear friend," she wrote on the sixth of November, "how happy your assurances of affection make me. People who are very, very happy do not know how to write down their joy. I have no words but the old, old ones—I do so love you! If I but think of your name, I bless it forever. When your letters come, I kiss the seal before I open them; when I write you a letter I look love into every word I write. My father does not speak of you—oh, there is so much else for him to talk of! My mother looks only the sweet sympathy she will not utter, until my father wills it—and in that she is right, I think. Annette may suspect, but she knows nothing certainly; our secret is very much our own yet, and the dearer for it. You would say so also, if you could see and hear New York at the present time. In spite of our small deprivations, we are all very happy. The militia stationed here are having a most sociable time, and there are parades and reviews constantly in progress. The theatre is now filled every night it is open, and if only some gallant privateer, or some sailor from the ships comes in, the performance has to stop until he has been cheered to the skies. I am sorry, my dearest friend, that you did not join the navy; for just now sailors are the idols of our city—I do not mean that—oh, no! I could not bear to think of you at sea. I am counting the days and the hours now. I heard mother tell Annette that the men at the Narrows would be home for the great parade on Evacuation Day, Annette clapped her hands and said 'then Leonard Murray will return to us; and I shall ask grandmother to give him a dinner. He will be so glad to see me,' she added, 'and I shall be so glad to see him.' She put me out of calculation, and I did not mind; for if *you* remember, what care I if all the world forgets me? It is too bad the English ships will not give you a chance of glory, we have almost forgot how to fear them. Every one is in high spirits; we have no doubt of God, nor our country, nor of our brave sailors and soldiers. And, oh, Leonard! dear, dear Leonard, I have not one doubt of you. So then I send you my heart; for I do trust you, Leonard, for all the joy that life shall bring me. Yes I do! I do! Sappha."

Such foolish words! Ah, no! Such words of delightful wisdom! And happy indeed is the woman who in her youth hides such letters away in her Book of Life. They will sweeten every page of it—even to the very end.

CHAPTER
FOUR

Introduces
Mr. Achille St. Ange

ON the afternoon of November the twenty-fifth Annette was sitting with her grandmother in the comfortable, large living room which the elder woman loved. Outside the day was extraordinarily beautiful for the season. The sky was nearly cloudless, the balmy air had just that snap of early frost which made it exhilarating, and there was not a breath of wind. The tall, straight Michaelmas daisies stood radiantly still in their late purple glory; the golden marigolds glowed at their feet; every twig, and every blade of grass might have been cut out of stone. It was a speechless, motionless, spell-bound garden, lit up with a flood of winter sunshine.

Madame had her knitting in her hand, but she was not busy with it; her gaze was fixed upon Annette, who was fastening more carefully the silver spangles on a gown of blue gauze. "Madame Duval barely catches them," she said plaintively, "and I suppose there will be dancing to-night."

"I do not think there will be anything of the kind, Annette. Your aunt will have to use the largest room for dinner, and dinner dishes are not moved by magic. Also, I do not intend to remain there all night; so fine is the weather we can easily return home. It has been such a tumultuous day that I shall need sleep, and out of my own bed I never get it."

"But the parade was splendid, grandmother; and I am sure you are glad you saw it."

"Oh, my child, my years it made me count. So well I remember the first Evacuation Day parade. General Washington and the victorious army led it. Then I wept because your grandfather was not among living heroes—to-day I did not weep—so soon we shall meet again." A sound of distant music arrested speech, and they listened in silence till it died away. Then Annette said: "There are to be so many public dinners, and the theatre is to be brilliantly illuminated. Oh, grandmother, I wish you would let me go with the Westervelt party to the theatre. What excitement there will be there! What cheering and singing and fine acting! and at uncle's!—well, you know what uncle's Evacuation dinners are—ten or twelve old men who were in his company will be there; and they will tell the same stories, and sing the same songs, and pay the ladies the same compliments. I would like to go to the theatre."

"To your uncle's dinner party you will go to-night; and I think the dress you are spangling is too light. You had better wear something warmer."

"Grandmother, I saw Sappha's dress yesterday—it is a white gauze with brilliant crimson roses scattered over it; and it is to be worn over a rich, white satin slip. Do you want me to look a dowdy beside her?"

"Like a dowdy you could not look, not if you tried to, Annette. Of your health I want you to take good care. Your mother had very weak lungs."

"My lungs are strong enough, grandmother, it is my heart that is so dangerously weak. It is always giving me sensations. Leonard Murray has come back so handsome, I felt my heart as soon as I saw him."

"Annette, in such a way as that a good girl should not talk, even to her grandmother. I do not think it is respectable. I am too lenient with you, and you are too free with me."

"Grandmother, who is that? He is coming in here. I never saw the man before. How handsome! how genteel! how simply noble he looks! I must send Lucas to open the door."

In a minute or two the stranger let the knocker fall lightly in a rat-tat-tat, and the little negro boy who answered his summons put him into the chill best parlour, and brought his card to madame. She read the name on it with difficulty, and passing the card to Annette, drew her brows together in an effort of remembrance.

"Mr. Achille St. Ange."

"St. Ange! St. Ange! Ah, yes, I now recollect. Gertrude Bergen married a French gentleman called St. Ange. Gertrude and I were schoolgirls together. I was one of her bridesmaids. This young man must be her grandson. It seems incredible—impossible——"

"But in the meantime, grandmother, this young man is waiting in the cold parlour."

"I had forgotten. Let Lucas bring him here. Do you hear, Lucas?"

"Yes, madame."

In a few moments Mr. St. Ange entered, with the air and manner of a prince; bowing first to madame, and then, with a shade less deference, to Annette. His slight, agile figure had the erect carriage of one born to command; and his general appearance and aspect was suggestively haughty, and yet when people became familiar with him, they saw only a careless tolerance of all opinions, and a certain compatibility of temper, which easily passed for good nature. His hair was intensely black and soft, and lay in straight locks on his white brow; his eyes, equally dark, were full of a sombre fire; his skin had the pallor of the hot land from which he came.

Madame rose to welcome him and remained standing until he was seated, then she smilingly resumed her chair, and said:

"Indeed, Mr. St. Agne, for a moment I had forgotten. Backward for more than half a century I had to think—then I remembered your grandmother—Gertrude Bergen. Am I right?"

"Madame is correct," he answered; "my grandmother died ten years ago. My mother is also no longer with the son, who needs her so much. I have come to New York, and I have ventured to present a claim on your kindness three generations old."

His handsome face, his direct manner, the utter absence of anything subtle in his air or appearance, perhaps even the grave richness of his perfectly suitable attire prepossessed both women instantly in his favour. Madame took out wine and cake with her own hands; Annette was the cup-bearer, and he accepted the service with a grace far more flattering than any challenge or deprecation of it could have been. And as Annette handed him the glass, he incidentally—quite incidentally, indeed—lifted his eyes to hers, and the glance seemed to rivet her to the spot, to include not only her vision, but her very soul.

Mr. Achille St. Ange wanted a friend, that was all; and madame promised to do her best to advise him in the new life upon which he was entering. They talked a little of his Louisiana home, and of his future intentions, but the visit was not prolonged at this time. "He had made his introduction," he said, "the future he hoped to justify it."

The advent of this rekindled friendship was quite an event to madame. She could do nothing but talk of it; she kept recalling her life with Gertrude Bergen, and she wondered a little over her grandson's appearance. "But, then," she continued, "Gertrude was from Belgium, and swarthy, though fine-looking. Much darker is her grandson, more intense, more buoyant—well, that, too, is natural; it is the French *esprit* upon the Dutch respectability. His grandfather I remember now—the most careless of mortals, full of fire and fight, and yet amiable—most amiable. We all envied Gertrude a little. He took her to France—to some little town near Paris. How did they get to Louisiana, I wonder?"

Annette was the silent one in this event. She let her grandmother talk. She wanted to hear all about Achille. The man had made a singular impression on her. Many lovers had been at her feet, but she had really loved none of them. Was this strange emotion—more akin to tears than laughter—really love? She told herself that the man was captivating, and that she must be "on guard" whenever he was present. And withal she kept wondering "what he thought of her," and worrying because she was not dressed to the best advantage.

Perhaps she would not have been quite pleased if she had been truthfully told Mr. St. Ange's feeling concerning her, for it was one of a perverse admiration, oddly mingled of repulsion and fascination. He had never before seen a woman so startlingly fair, so white—so white and pink—eyes so blue, hair so palely yellow; her beauty struck him as great, but almost uncanny—he wondered if so white a woman was not equally cold. Would she ever warm to love? And then he answered his reflections with a soft utterance: "We shall see! We shall see!"

The dinner party at the judge's was to be at four o'clock, and the rest of the afternoon was fully occupied in preparing for it. And in this preparation, if Annette had been keeping "guard" over herself, she would have noticed that even already the stranger influenced her. She laid aside the spangled robe and put on a gown of purple cloth trimmed with minever. And she thought, and said, that this change was in deference to her grandmother's desires; but in reality it came from the feeling that Mr. St. Ange would not be at her uncle's, and that no one else much mattered. Even if Leonard was present, she felt now that Leonard was a past interest; St. Ange was new and different, and his favour full of all kinds of possibilities.

On arriving at the house on the Bowling Green they found it in a festal state of confusion. The largest parlour had been stripped of all its movable furniture, and the space devoted to a long table, and to chairs for the twenty or more people that were to be seated. It already shone with massive silver and beautiful crystal; while the odours of delicious meats and confections inspired a sense of warmth and comfort, and of good things to come. Blazing fires were in every grate; the numerous silver sconces on the walls, and the scintillating crystal chandelier above the table were all filled with wax candles, which would be lit as soon as the daylight waned a little farther. The judge was in full evening dress, and madame in brocaded ruby velvet, with a string of pearls round her yet beautiful throat. And when Sapphira came into the room Annette was deeply mortified at her own foolishness in dressing so plainly. She felt that she had wounded and humiliated herself for a probability. In a moment of new hope she had let slip the certainties Sappha had embraced. For Sappha, in her rose-sprinkled gown, looked as if she stepped out of the heart of a rose. Her brilliant colour, the sunlike radiancy of her eyes, her glowing gown, made her, indeed, a beauteous apparition, wonderfully sweet and noble. Annette looked at her with an envious surprise. Something had happened to her cousin Sappha; what it was she did not understand, but Sappha had an air of mystery and mastery, unperceived by herself, but rousing in all who knew the girl intimately a questioning wonder. It came from an interior sense of settlement and completeness; Sappha had found him whom her soul loved, and the restlessness, the unconscious seeking and craving of girlhood, was over.

In her desire to somewhat equalise things, Annette gave her cousin a very flowery description of her grandmother's strange visitor. She described him as the most beautiful, elegant, and graceful of human creatures; and she emphasised very strongly her grandmother's strong claim upon his affection and attention—" 'a friendship in its third generation,' he called it, Sappha, and I suppose we shall see a great deal of him. He is to call to-morrow to consult grandmother about his money and his business."

"Where does he come from?" Sappha asked, but in such a listless way that Annette responded angrily, "It is easy to see you do not care where he comes from. I thought you would feel some interest in such a romantic affair. What are the old men and women who will be here to-night in comparison with such an adorable young man? And how you have dressed yourself for them! Do you imagine they will appreciate, or, perhaps, even notice it?"

"I dressed myself in honour of the day, and for my father and mother's oldest friends. Here are some of them coming. I must help mother to receive them."

"I am afraid it is going to be an unlucky and disagreeable night," sighed Annette to herself, as she stood by the fire watching the rapid arrival of cloaked and hooded guests. As she mused amid the happy sounds of welcome, she noticed a sudden shutting and opening of Sappha's bright eyes, and an expression of more eager delight on her face. A quick presentiment flashed through Annette's mind, and she followed her cousin's glance to the little group advancing. Yes, it was as she expected!—Leonard Murray's fair head towered in youthful beauty and animation above all the white-haired men and women entering the room with him. Then Annette slipped sweetly past all obstructions, and with a smile said softly to Sappha: "'I dressed myself in honour of the day, and for my father and mother's oldest friends!' Oh, Sappha! Sappha! Is Mr. Murray among their oldest friends?"

Sappha's face burned, but fortunately there was no time for words. The judge and Peter were seating their guests, and every one was for the moment silent and attentive. Madame, his mother, had the head of the table, and every guest saluted her as they passed to their own seats. And what a goodly company it was! Such sturdy, stalwart men; such rosy-faced, comfortable-looking, handsome women! such good-will and fellow-feeling! such amiable admiration of each other's dress and appearance! And when the slaves brought in, at shoulder height, the hot savoury dishes, such simultaneous delight to find them the Hollandish delicacies, which now remain to us only in printed descriptions; yes, even to the little saucers of that dear condiment made of pickled and spiced red cabbage, once so welcome and necessary to the Dutch palate. And pray, what mouth once familiar with its savour and flavour and relish could resist the delicately thin, purple strips? Olives were already taking its place at the tables of the high-bred citizens, who loved French fashions and French cooking; but among these old-fashioned, picturesque figures, its antique, homely taste and aspect was surely beautiful and fitting. At any rate, there was no one at Judge Bloommaert's dinner table who would not have passed by caviare or olives or any other condiment in its favour.

Who has ever written down happiness? and what superfluity of words would describe the good fellowship of the next hour? There was no "hush" on any source of innocent pleasure. With the good food went good wine and good company, and above all, and through all, a good fellowship bounded by the strongest of public and private ties.

And as the more substantial dishes gave place to fruits and confections, the nobler part of the feast took its precedency. The wine was consecrated to patriotism and friendship, in heartfelt toasts; and one of the earliest, and the most enthusiastic, was given to Madame Jonaca Bloommaert. It was a spontaneous innovation, roused by her beautiful old age, and her young enthusiasm, and she was for a moment embarrassed by the unexpected. Only for a moment; then she rose erect as a girl, her face kindling to her emotions, and in a clear voice answered the united salutation:

"My friends, I thank you all. There has been much talk of the Dutch and of the Americans. Well, then, I am a Dutchwoman, and I am an American. Both names are graven on my soul. America is my home, America is my native land, and I would give my own life for her prosperity. But also, Holland is my *Vaderland!* and my *Moederland!* I have never seen it, I never shall see it, but what then? When our *Vaderland* and *Moederland* is lost to sight, good Dutchmen, and good Dutchwomen, *find it in their hearts!*" Her thin hands were clasped over her breast, her eyes full of a solemn ecstacy; for that moment she put off the vesture of her years, and stood there, shining in the eternal youth of the soul.

In the midst of feelings not translatable she sat down, and as the little tumult subsided Peter Bloommaert rose, and said:

"My dear grandmother has opened our hearts for the song my brother Chris wrote, the night before he went away. I promised to sing it for him this night, and my friend, Leonard Murray—who has it set to some good music—will help me. It is my business to build, it is my brother Christopher's business to sail, and to fight, but I say this—and it is the truth—if America, my native land, needs my hands for fighting, the love I bear for my *Vaderland* will only make me fight the better for my native land." Then he looked at Leonard, and the two young, vibrant voices, blended Christopher's "Flag Song" with a stirring strain of catching melody:

O Flag of the Netherlands, are not our hearts
  All flagbearers sacred to thee?
To our song, and our shout, O banner fly out!
  Fly out o'er the land and the sea!
Unfold thee, unfold thee, invincible flag,
  Remember thy brave, younger years,
When men crying 'Freedom!' died underneath thee,
  'Mid storming and clashing of spears.
        Flag of Fidelity!
        Piety, Courage!
        Thy Blue, White, and Red
        We salute!

Thou art blue as the skies, and red as the dawn,
  Thou art white as the noonday light;
Fidelity gave thee her beautiful blue,
  And Piety bound thee in white.
Then Faith and Fidelity went to the field
  Where the blood of thy heroes was shed;
And there, where the sword was the breath of the Lord,
  They gave thee thy ribbon of red.
        Flag of Fidelity!
        Piety! Courage!
        Thy Blue, White, and Red
        We salute!

The enthusiasm evoked by this *Vlaggelied* was kept up in toast and story and song until the big clock in the hall struck seven. Then the judge and Colonel Rutgers rose; they were going to speak at a dinner given by the officers of the Third New York State Artillery, and others were going either to the theatre or to Scudder's Museum, both of which buildings were to be brilliantly illuminated. But a few of the guests would willingly have prolonged the present pleasure, and old Samuel Van Slyck said:

"Well, then, judge, too fast is your clock. There is yet one good half-hour before seven."

"No, no, Van Slyck," answered the judge, "a Dutch clock goes always just so; you cannot make it too fast." And to this national joke the party rose; they rose with a smile that ended in an involuntary sigh and the little laughing stir with which human beings try to hide the breaking up of a happiness.

Cloaked and hooded, the majority went northward up Broadway; but quite a number went eastward to Nassau, Wall, and State streets. In this party were Madame Bloommaert and Annette, their escorts being Peter, and Leonard Murray. They were the last to leave, for they were in no great hurry; so they took leisurely farewells, and some of the women drank a cup of tea standing cloaked in the parlour. In this short postponement Leonard found the moments he had been longing for. Never had Sappha been so entrancing in his eyes, and the radiancy of her beauty had not charmed him more than the graceful generosity with which she had suffered herself to be eclipsed for the honour and pleasures of others. And, oh, how sweet he made the cup of tea he brought her, with such honeyed words of praise! And how proud and happy he was made by her answer.

"If I was fair to you, dear Leonard, I have my perfect wish; for when you are not here, then all the world is nothing."

They were both happy and excited, and it is little wonder if they betrayed to Annette's sharp eyes more than they intended. She was spending all her fascinations on her cousin Peter, but while making eyes at cousin Peter was not oblivious of her cousin Sappha. And when the festal hours were quite over and she was alone with her grandmother, she could not avoid giving utterance to her suspicions:

"Grandmother," she said, putting the tips of her fingers together and resting her chin upon them, "I have an idea."

"Well, then, what is it?"

"I think Sappha and Leonard Murray are not only in love with each other—I think, also, they are engaged."

"You talk more nonsense than usual. No one has said a word of that kind to me. Of this family, I am the head, there could be no engagement without my approval. Your uncle and aunt would have told me at once—Sappha also. About engagements, what do you know? Lovers you have, but making love and making a life-long engagement are different things. Sappha is not engaged."

"Then 'tis a thousand pities, for I am sure she is mortally in love with Leonard."

"And if he was mortally in love with Sappha, what wonder? More beautiful every day grows Sapphira Bloommaert."

"That is because she is in love. 'Love makes the lover fair,'" and she began to hum the song.

"I have never seen love any change make in you. A new dress might, but——"

"I have never been in love. A new dress is the height of my affection. However, I go back to what I said—I am sure Sappha and Leonard are engaged."

"Was some one telling you this story?"

"No. I told the story to myself."

"How did you make it up?"

"I kept my eyes open."

"Well, what then?"

"I saw that they had that 'air' about their slightest intercourse that mere experimental lovers never dare. I mean that sure look that married people have. Watch them and you will see it."

"Watch, I shall not. See, I shall not. As soon as there is any purpose of marriage for Sapphira Bloommaert, I shall be told of it—told immediately. If I was not, I should never forgive the slight,—never! And your uncle and aunt know it. Can you find nothing pleasanter about the dinner to talk of? It was a dinner to gladden Dutch hearts. I helped your aunt arrange the courses, and I gave her many of my choice receipts for the dishes. No one in New York has such fine Hollandish receipts as I have, except, perhaps, old Peter Bogart, the biscuit maker."

"I know, grandmother, I never pass his shop at Broadway and Cortlandt Street without going in for some doughnuts. No one can make such good ones; and how far back he looks in his smallclothes and long stockings, his big hat, and knee buckles, and shoe buckles, and sleeve buckles, his powdered hair and his long cue."

"Yes, Peter Bogart and Mr. and Mrs. Skaats are among the few Dutch who have never changed with changing customs. While moving with the city and the times they have retained their picturesque dress and household life. And in all New York no one is more respected; no one more interesting and lovable than Mr. and Mrs. Skaats."

"I never saw them!"

"I am sure you have not."

"Well, then, who are they?"

"Mr. Skaats is custodian of the City Hall, and this delightful old couple often entertain the judges, lawyers, and the councilmen at their dinner table; on which is always found the Hollandish dishes we are so rapidly forgetting. Your uncle occasionally dines with them, and would do so more frequently if his own home was not so convenient. You must ask him to take you to see these dear old Dutch people; or I dare say Sappha knows them. Soon they will only be a pleasant memory."

"I do not need to go and see the Skaats for a pleasant Dutch memory. There is no finer Dutchwoman in the world than my grandmother, Madame Jonaca Bloommaert."

Madame was gratified at this compliment, and, perhaps, in order to return the pleasure, or else for the sake of changing the subject, she said: "Mr. St. Ange will be here in the morning—but I do not think it is necessary to warm the best parlour."

"No, no, grandmother. Our sitting-room is far more distinguished. The best parlour is like a great many parlours; our sitting-room has a character—a most respectable one. I could see that he was impressed by it. I dare say he will soon know Sappha, and of course he will fall in love with her, and then there will be some interest in watching how Leonard Murray will like that."

"Well, then, keep yourself clear; see, and hear, and say nothing; that is wise."

"But I like to meddle—a little bit. I wonder if Leonard and Sappha are really engaged! Leonard might have come in and sat an hour with us; I expected so much courtesy from him. But no! though I told him we were so lonely in the evenings, he never offered to spend a little time with us. I dare say he returned at once to the Bowling Green. I saw him say a word or two to Sappha as he left, and she smiled and nodded, and I am very sure he was asking her permission to return."

"Such nonsense! He would have asked your aunt that question."

"Oh, the question is nothing! any question meant the same thing. I have no doubt at all, Leonard is at this moment with Sappha. They will be pretending to help aunt Carlita, but then helping her will mean pleasing themselves."

But for once Annette's sensibility, though so selfishly acute, was not correct. Leonard did not return to the Bowling Green, and Sappha was disappointed and hurt by his failure to do so. For an hour she sat with her mother before the fire, expecting every moment to hear his footsteps. And this expectation was so intense that she was frequently certain of their approach—his light rapid tread, his way of mounting the steps two at a time—both these sounds were repeated again and again upon her sensitive ear drum, and yet Leonard came not. Alas, what heart-watcher has not been tormented by these spectral promises? for the ears have their phantoms as well as the eyes. At last she reluctantly gave up hope, and as she lit her night candle she said in a tone of affected cheerfulness:

"I suppose Leonard would stay an hour or two with grandmother and Annette."

"Why should you suppose such a thing? I am sure he never thought of doing so. I dare say he went with Peter to the theatre."

"Grandmother had a visitor to-day—a grandson of Mrs. Saint-Ange."

"She told me so."

"He is very handsome, Annette says."

"Well, then, he will, perhaps, find work for idle hearts to do. Your grandmother declares Annette shall marry a Dutchman. But when I was a girl French nobles fleeing from Robespierre elbowed one another on Broadway, and they carried off most of the rich and pretty Dutch maidens. A Frenchman is a great temptation; your grandmother will have to guard her determination, or she may be disappointed."

"Good-night, dear mother. I will help you in the morning to put everything straight."

"Good-night, and good angels give you good dreams, dear one."

And as Sappha put down her candle in the dim, lonely room, and hastened her disrobing because of the cold, she could not help wondering where all the enthusiasms of the early evening were gone to—the light, the warmth, the good cheer, the good fellowship, the joy of song, the thrill of love. They had been so vividly present two hours ago, and now they were so vividly absent that the tears came unbidden to her eyes, and she had an overpowering sense of discouragement and defeat. And the sting of this inward depression was Leonard Murray. "He might have come back for an hour! He might have come! and he did not." Murmuring this sorrowful complaint she went into the land of sleep.

And in that world of the soul she met her angel, and was so counselled and strengthened that she awoke with a light heart and with song upon her lips—all her fret and lurking jealousy turned into a frank confidence; all her doubts changed into the happiest hopes. And as every one has, more or less, frequently experienced this marvellous communion, this falling on sleep angry, disappointed, dismayed, and awakening soothed, satisfied, encouraged, there is no need to speculate concerning such a spiritual transformation. Those who have the key to it require no tutor; those who have not the key could not be made to understand.

Sappha simply and cheerfully accepted the change; she was even able to see where she had been unreasonable in her expectations; her whole mood was softened and more generous. She dressed herself and went down, rosy with the cold, and her father found her standing before the blazing fire warming her feet and hands. The windows were white with frost, and a bugle sounded piercingly sweet in the cold, clear air; but the big room was full of comfort and of the promise of a good plentiful meal.

They began to talk at once about the dinner party of the previous evening, and Sappha said: "The best part of the whole affair was grandmother. I think, father, that she looked about twenty years old, when she was speaking. How radiant was her face! How sweet her voice! How proud I am to be her granddaughter!"

And this acknowledgment so pleased the judge that he answered: "I shall never forget her countenance as she lifted her eyes to the flags above the mantlepiece; her glance took in both, with equal affection; the red, white, and blue of the Netherlands, and the Star Spangled Banner which hung by its side. And let me tell you, Sappha, I liked our Christopher's song, and also I liked the music Mr. Murray wrote for it. One was as good as the other. Here comes mother, and the coffee, and how delicious the meat and bread smell! Mother is always the bringer of good things. Sit here, Sappha, it is warmer than your own place."

During breakfast the gathering of the previous evening was more fully discussed; and in speaking of madame and Annette Sapphira made mention of Mr. St. Ange, who had visited them. Somewhat to their astonishment the judge said he had heard of the young man through the Livingstons, with whom he had had some business transactions. Mr. Edward Livingston, of New Orleans, had supplied him with introductions to some of the best New York families, and he thought it likely, from what he had been told, that Annette's description of his beauty and excessive gentility was not more of an exaggeration than Annette's usual statements.

"You have been told things about him, father. Then he has been in New York more than two days?"

"He has been here about two weeks."

"Oh! I understood from Annette that he had flown to grandmother's friendship at once. She spoke as if they were to have the introducing of him to society in New York."

"Well, then, they can do a great deal for Mr. St. Ange in that way. I fancy he is rather popular already among the Livingston and Clinton set. My mother can give him equally fine introductions among the Dutch aristocracy. I believe him to be a gentleman, and I should think it quite prudent to offer him any courtesy that comes in your way."

After the judge had left home the two women continued the conversation. Mrs. Bloommaert was certain St. Ange was at least of French parentage. "His name is one of the best names among the nobility of France," she said. "And if he is truly a French gentleman, you will see of what expression that word 'gentleman' is capable. But I wish not that you should meet him through Annette—her airs will be insufferable. I think it possible he may be at the Girauds' ball to-morrow night. There you would meet him quite naturally. It is strange Josette Giraud did not name him to you when she called last Monday."

"Josette loves my brother Peter. Peter has her whole heart. There would not be room for the finest French gentleman in the world in it."

"Josette is a good girl. I wish much that Peter would marry her. But no, Peter thinks only of ships."

"Oh, you don't know, mother! Peter talks about ships, but not about girls. All the same he thinks a deal about Josette Giraud."

"Sometimes I fear Annette. I have seen her! She makes eyes at Peter, she admires him, and lets him see it—and men are so easily captured."

"But then, Annette does not want to capture Peter. She is only amusing herself. She makes eyes at all good-looking young men. She cannot help it."

"Your grandmother ought not to allow her to do so."

"Poor grandmother! She does not know it, or see it. If she did, she could as easily prevent a bird from singing as keep Annette from looking lovely things out of her beautiful eyes. And really, mother, she intends no wrong. How can she help being so pretty and so clever?"

"Peter could have taken them home last night without the assistance of Leonard Murray—and Leonard wanted to stay a while here, but Annette asked him with one of those 'lovely looks' to walk with them, and Leonard never once objected."

"How could he?"

"And this morning she will have no recollection of either Peter or Leonard. She will be busy with the conquest of this Mr. St. Ange."

"If so, Mr. St. Ange will soon be her captive. I shall think no worse of him for a ready submission. 'Honour to the vanquished!' was a favourite device of the knights of the olden times."

Mrs. Bloommaert was, however, a little out of her calculation. So was Annette. Both had been sure St. Ange would avail himself of the earliest possible hour in which a call could be politely possible; and Annette, somewhat to her grandmother's amusement, had dressed herself in the fascinating little Dutch costume she had worn at a St. Nicholas festival. She said she had done so because it was so warm and comfortable for a cold morning; and she smoothed the quilted silk petticoat and the cloth jacket down, and made little explanations about them and the vest of white embroidery, which neither deceived madame nor herself. Her fair hair was in two long braids, tied with blue ribbons; her short petticoat revealed her small feet dressed in grey stockings clocked with orange; and high-heeled shoes fastened with silver latchets. She was picturesque and very pretty, and armed from head to feet for conquest. But, alas! St. Ange came not. In fact he was comfortably sleeping while she was watching; and it was not until the middle of the afternoon he made the promised visit. He had been dining at Mr. Grinnel's the previous evening, and had afterwards gone to the theatre with a large party. And he lamented with an almost womanly plaintiveness the bitter cold, that, for him, spoiled every entertainment. The theatre, he said, was at freezing point; and how the ladies endured the temperature in their evening gowns was to him a marvel. Then he looked round madame's fine old room with its solid oak, and massive silver, its curtained windows, thick carpet, plentiful bearskin rugs, and huge blazing fire, and said with a happy sigh: " It was the only room fit to live in that he had seen in New York. Handsome rooms! oh, yes, very handsome rooms he had seen, but all cold, killing cold!"

Madame reminded him that New York and Lousiania were in different latitudes; and Annette found him the most cosey chair in the warmest corner, and the general warmth and sympathy was soon effectual. Complaint was changed for admiration, and as the day waned, and the firelight made itself more and more impressive, his conversation lost its business and social character, and became personal and reminiscent.

Madame asked him if he was born in New Orleans, and at the question his eyes flashed like living furnaces filled with flame.

"But no," he answered. "No, no! I was born in that island that God made like Paradise, and negroes have made like hell. Near the town of Cayes I was born, in a vast stone mansion standing on a terrace and shaded by stately palms. Six terraces led from it to the ocean, and marble steps led from one terrace to another. My father had left France very early in the reign of Louis the Sixteenth, and I have heard that even at that time he had a positive prescience of the horrors of the coming revolution. However, without this incentive he would have made the emigration; for he had fallen heir to immense hereditary estates in Hayti, which had been in the possession of our family from the time of Columbus. Here he cultivated the cane, introducing it himself from the West Indies; and he also exported great quantities of mahogany, and of that beautiful wood which is fragrant in its native forests as the sweetest of roses. There were many slaves on the estate, who lived in a little village of their own, about a mile away from the house. During the awful insurrection of 1791 my father defended his mansion, and as he had great influence with the blacks he was not seriously interfered with; but he was never afterwards happy. He foresaw that the continual fighting between the blacks and the mulattoes must finally drive all white people from the island, and he prepared for this emergency by sending to New Orleans at every opportunity all the money he could spare. In 1803 the long years of continual horrors culminated, and the United States having bought Louisiania, my father resolved to remove there at once. A British frigate was in the harbour of Cayes at the time, and arrangements were made with the captain for our immediate removal. I was then of fourteen years, and I knew only too well the demoniac character of these insurrections. This one also was likely to be especially cruel, owing to the presence of French troops sent by Napoleon to subjugate the blacks. Secretly I assisted my father to carry to the ship the money, jewels, and papers we intended to take with us, but ere this duty was quite accomplished we saw that there was no time to lose. With anxious hearts we watched the ship sail northward, but this movement was only a feint. We knew that about midnight she would return to the appointed place for us.

"Sick with many fears we watched for the setting of the sun. It had been a hot, suffocating day, and every hour of it had indicated a fierce, and still more fierce, gathering of the combatants. Hellish cries, and shouts to the beating of drums, and the wild chanting of the Obeah priests had filled the daylight with unspeakable terrors. But when the sun sank, suddenly a preternatural calm followed. Mysterious lights were seen in the thick woods, howlings and cries, horrible and inhuman, came out of its dense darkness. Abominable sacrifices were being offered to the demon they worshipped, and we knew that as soon as these rites were over indiscriminate slaughter and devilish cruelties would begin. My mother had my little sister in her arms, and I went with her through the forest to the seaside. She reached our meeting place by one exit, I by another; for we were suspiciously watched, and durst not leave the house in a body. My father and my two eldest brothers were to join us by different routes.

"That awful walk! That enchanted walk through the hot, thick forest! I shall never forget it in this life or the next—I shall never forget it! Even the insects were voiceless, and the huge serpents lay prone in spellbound stillness. We had not reached the sea before a terrific thunder storm broke over us. Then the glare and gloom made each other more awful; the black sky was torn by such lightning as you have no conception of; and in the midst of natural terrors no one can describe the blacks held a carnival of out-rage and death in every conceivable form of hellish cruelty that Obeah could devise.

" Nearly dead with fatigue and fright my mother reached the little cove where the ship was to meet us, and there we waited in an agony of terror for the arrival of my father and brothers. They came not. And if the ship was noticed lying near we should be discovered. I walked back as far as I durst, looking for any trace of them. My mother lay upon the sand praying. My little sister slept at her side. In that hour childhood left me forever. In that hour I learned how much one may suffer, and yet not die. Daylight began to appear, and the ship was about half a mile from the land. Then I called,—not with the voice I am now using,—but with some far mightier force, *'Father! Father!'* And at that moment he appeared, pushing his way through the green tangle. And his face was whiter than death, because it was full of horror and agony, which the face of death very rarely is.

" He could not speak. He made motions to me to signal the ship, which I instantly did. It was not many minutes till we saw our signal answered and a little boat coming quickly toward us. But my father quivered with anxiety, and he said, afterwards, they were the most awful moments of his existence. For he knew there was a party of negroes in pursuit, and, indeed, we were just getting into the boat when we heard them crashing through the underwood. My mother had said only two words, 'August! Victor!' and my father had answered only, 'Dead.' Then the sailors pulled with all their strength to escape the bullets that followed us; but one struck and killed the babe in my mother's arms, and another fatally wounded a man at one of the oars. He fell, and my father took his place."

Annette was watching St. Ange like one fascinated; her blue eyes were wide open, her face terror-stricken, her little form all a-tremble. Madame had covered her face, but when Achille ceased speaking she stretched out her hand to him, and for a few moments there was an intense passionful silence. Madame broke it.

"You reached New Orleans safely?"

"It was a hard journey. The captain had taken on a great number of the fugitives, and he waited around the island for two days, rescuing many more who had trusted to the mercy of the sea rather than dare the bloody riot on land; so that we were much overcrowded and soon suffering for food and water. Fever followed, and when we reached New Orleans we were in a pitiable plight. My mother did not recover from this experience. She never asked further about my brothers, and my father would not have told her the truth, if she had asked. 'They are dead! They died like heroes!' That was all my father ever told me. It was all that I wished to know.

"On Bayou Têche we bought a plantation, and began again the cultivation of the cane, but mother died visibly, day by day, and within six weeks we buried her under the waving banners of the grey moss that hung so mournfully from the live oaks, that January morning. As to my father, he was never again the same. He had been a very joyous man, but he smiled no more, and he fretted continually over the loss of his family and his beautiful home in Hayti. For some years we were all in all to each other, and he laboured hard to bring our new plantation into a fine condition. Then he, too, left me, and the place was hateful in my sight. I wished to escape forever from the sight of negroes. I feared them, even in my sleep. Had not those who had shared our food, and games, and constant society slain with fiendish delight my poor brothers and my only sister? I was acquainted with Mr. Edward Livingston, a lawyer in New Orleans, and who himself had married a beautiful refugee from the great Haitian insurrection, and he advised me not to sell my plantation, as in view of the war I could not get its value. I would not listen to him—a simpler life with the black cloud removed seemed to me the only thing I desired. But no, I have not here escaped it. What shall I do?"

"The blacks in New York are mostly free, and they are comparatively few in number," said madame.

"Few in number—that is some security. But now, I must tell you, that this summer, on the very night that there was a great volcanic eruption from the burning heart of St. Vincent, there was another massacre. Amid the roaring darkness, the intolerable heat, the rain of ashes, the stench of sulphur, and the stygian horror of the heavens and the earth, the blacks, made frantic by their terror, and led by the priests of Obeah, fell upon the whites indiscriminately. They fled to the ships in the harbour—to the sea—anywhere, anywhere, from those huge animal natures whose eyes were flaming with rage, and whose souls were without pity. Nearly one hundred of these fugitives finally reached Norfolk and Virginia. Some had been warned either by their own souls, or by friends, and had money and jewels with them; others were quite destitute; many were sick, and their condition was pitiable. All desired to reach the French settlements in Louisiana, but transit by water was most uncertain, nearly all the usual shipping being employed in the more congenial business of privateering. Then, in the midst of their distress, comes into port one day Captain Christopher Bloommaert. He had with him a fine English frigate, the prize of his skill and valour. And when he understood the case of these poor souls, he called his men together and proposed to them the God-like voyage of carrying the miserables to New Orleans. '’Tis but a little way out of our purposed course,' he said, 'and who knows on what tack good fortune may meet us?' And the men answered with a shout of ready assent, and so they finally reached New Orleans. I saw them land. Many of them were old friends of my family, and I heard such stories from their lips as make men mad. One old planter, who had money with him, bought my estate, and took those with him to its shelter who had neither money nor friends. Their kindness to each other was wonderful. As for me, I hastened away from scenes that had cast a pall over all my life. Yet I forget not; to forget would be an impossible mercy."

Then madame talked comfortably to the young man, and after a while tea was brought in, and Annette, grave and silent for once, made it; and quietly watched, and listened, and served. St. Ange liked her better in this mood. The other Annette, with her little coquetries, had not pleased him half so well. When he left she understood that she had gained favour in his eyes; he kissed her hand with an enthralling grace and respect—or, at least, Annette found it so. And that night, though she felt certain Leonard Murray was singing the new songs with Sappha, she told herself that she "did not care if he was. Achille was twice as interesting; he was, indeed, a romantic, a tragic hero—and very nearly a lover. And he was so captivating, so unusually handsome!" She went over the rather long list of young men with whom she was friendly, and positively assured herself that all were commonplace compared with this wonderful Achille. And, to be sure, his small but elegant figure, his pale passionate face, set in those straight black locks, his caressing voice, his subtle smile, his gentle pressure of the hand—all these charms were not the prominent ones of the practical, business-like young men with whom she was most familiar.

After St. Ange's departure madame sat silent for some time, and Annette watched her with a strange speculation in her mind—did people really keep their emotions fresh when they were three-score and ten years old? Her grandmother had seemed to feel all that she had felt. Her hands, her feet, her whole figure had revealed strong sensation, her eyes been tender with sympathy and keen with anger; her interest had never flagged. In passionate sensibility had twenty years no superiority over seventy years? Patience, Annette! Time will tell you the secret. Oh, the soul keeps its youth!

She considered this question, however, until it wearied her, and then she asked abruptly: "Grandmother, of what are you dreaming?"

"Mr. St. Ange. I was recalling the day on which his grandfather carried off to France pretty Gertrude Bergen. She went to France and died in Haiti, and now her grandson is driven back by events he cannot control to New York."

"Where he will probably marry some other pretty Dutch maiden."

"And small heed we take of such things; we even count them of chance; yet, how often that which flowers to-day grows from very old roots."

"Grandmother, I want two new dresses. Can I have them?"

"Stuffs of every kind are very dear, Annette."

"Only two, grandmother."

"And Madame Lafarge's charges for making dresses are extravagant—the making is the worst."

"It has to be done, grandmother."

"Yes—but if you will turn to your Bible, Annette, you will find that the woman whose 'price was above rubies' made her own dresses."*

"Indeed, grandmother, you need only glance at any picture of a Bible woman to see that. Dresses without shape, without style—and as for *the fit!*" And Annette could only explain the enormity of the fit by throwing up her hands in expressive silence.

"If you get the dresses, then a new bonnet will be wanted."

"Yes, a bonnet would be a necessity; also some of those sweet furs that come from South America—so soft and grey are they. Oh, the ugliest woman looks pretty in them!"

"You are extortionate, Annette."

"Grandmother, I have not yet asked for a grand piano."

Then madame laughed. And Annette laid her soft cheek against madame and kissed her good-night. But though she walked delicately and almost on tip-toes to her own room, there was an air of triumph in the poise of her pretty head. She set the candle down by the mirror and looked complaisantly at herself.

"I shall get what I want," she said softly. "I always do."

* Proverbs xxxi. 22.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Chain of Causes

IT had been a stirring summer in New York, and the year was now closing with a remarkable month. For October had been signalised by two naval victories, the British war frigate *Frolic* having been captured by Captain Jones, and the *Macedonian* by Commodore Decatur, and as the successful commanders were expected in New York during December, great preparations were being made for their entertainment, the more so, as Captain Hull, the hero of the *Constitution,* would also be present.

Considering these things, Annette's request for two new gowns was a modest one; yet so many women were just then acquiring new gowns that it was with difficulty she succeeded in getting hers ready for Christmas Day. Achille had helped her to select her ball dress, and it was so lovely that she felt no fear of being on this occasion eclipsed by Sappha's gayer garments. That Achille had been consulted in its selection need not imply more than a rather intimate friendship; for the young man had become a familiar friend of a great many families. His sad history, his unusual beauty and grace, his many social accomplishments, and his faultless manners and dress, had given him almost by acclamation a very prominent position in the fashionable circles of New York. The Dutch claimed him on his mother's side, the French on his father's, and New Yorkers on the ground that he had of choice elected to become a citizen of New York. No gathering was considered complete without his presence; the most select clubs sought his association; and among those men who loved fine horses and skilful fencing, he was acknowledged an incomparable judge and master.

But though he accepted this homage, he did not seek it; nor did it seem to afford him much pleasure. Those most familiar with his habits knew that he very much preferred the society of the Friendly Club, which met in the parlour of Dr. Smith's house in Pine Street. Here, with young Washington Irving, Charles Brockden Brown, and other literary and learned men, he passed the hours that pleased him most. Nor was this his only social peculiarity. He formed a close friendship with the exile Aguste Louis de Singeron, the most famous pastry cook and confectioner in New York; also an ex-courtier and ex-warrior of Louis the Sixteenth: a little man of the most undaunted spirit, chivalrous and courteous. at once the most polite and the most passionate of men. Every day St. Ange might be found sitting in De Singeron's neat little shop on William Street. Sometimes their conversation seemed to be sufficient for their entertainment; sometimes a chess board lay on the narrow counter between them.

Fine ladies passed in and out, but St. Ange was never disturbed by their advent; and if a game was in progress no smiling invitation allured him to leave it unfinished. It will be seen then, that in spite of his gentle air and suave manners, he had a will sufficiently strong to insure him his own way.

His intercourse with the two Bloommaert families was, however, the most important of all his life's engagements. With other families he had frequent, but casual and intermittent, meetings; he was at the close of this year in one or other of the Bloommaert households every day. With Madame Jonaca he had formed a most affectionate alliance; he asked her counsel, and followed it; he told her all the pleasant news of that society which she still loved; he took her frequently out in his sleigh that she might see any unusual parade of the troops or militia; he brought her all the newspapers, and delighted himself and madame—as well as Annette—by reading aloud the numerous passages he had marked in them, as likely to interest both women. He came in when he was cold, to be warmed in Madame's cosey parlour; when he was lonely he went there for company; when he was sad for comfort.

In the Bowling Green home he had a footing quite as sure, though on a different foundation. In this family it was the judge who favoured him above all others. If St. Ange came into the room his face brightened, he put aside the paper or pamphlet he was reading, and turned to the young man for conversation. He went with him to Dr.

Smith's Club, and said it was the only sensible club he had ever visited. If the day was mild the two men took a brisk walk together on the Battery, and talked politics or science, and sometimes law, if the judge was engaged with any very interesting case; and if all these sources of intercourse were too few, out came the chess board, and in silent moves and monosyllabled conversation the evening passed away.

His relations with Mrs. Bloommaert and Sappha were equally friendly and familiar. Very early in his visits to the Bowling Green house he had assured himself that the lovely Sappha had no heart to give—that she was entirely devoted to his friend Leonard Murray. This conviction had at first given him a pang, for not only Sappha's beauty, but her beautiful disposition, had moved him to an admiration he had never before felt; and he had told himself that to win such an angel for his wife, with the entry into such a perfect home, and the alliance of characters so lovable as Judge Bloommaert and Sappha's mother, would be as much of heaven on earth as any man could hope to receive.

For a week he had nursed this charming illusion, then something happened—a look, a movement, a passing touch or whisper—one, or all of these things opened his eyes; he felt convinced that Leonard had some certain right that he could not honourably infringe upon—and honour was the first, the dominating, sentiment that moved Achille's thoughts and words and deeds. All was *not* fair in love to Achille St. Ange; so he deliberately put down his love for Sappha;

denied it perpetually to his craving heart; and taught himself to look upon her as his friend's beloved and his own friend and sister.

As a general thing Leonard understood this, though there had never been a word uttered between them regarding Sappha. Leonard was immersed in business of various kinds, but he quickly satisfied himself that he had nothing to fear from St. Ange's admiration of Sappha. The three were often together in the evenings, and nearly as often Annette made the fourth. Music, conversation, occasionally an informal cotillion, reading aloud, or recitations passed the happy hours, while the judge listened, watched, corrected, or advised, and Mrs. Bloommaert moved through all their entertainments, smiling the blessing of innocent happiness upon them.

The first shadow on this charming companionship fell about Christmas. It came in the form of a suspicion, not of Sappha's love, but of the judge's simple good-will. He had never pretended any friendship for Leonard, but during the past month he had treated him with a civility that left no cause for offence. Suddenly one evening Leonard became possessed with the idea that the judge's demonstrative liking for St. Ange was not as real as it appeared; that, in fact, it was a liking affected in a great measure for the purpose of making him feel the real indifference of his own treatment. He could hardly tell what circumstance had evoked this suspicion, but when he began to ponder the idea it grew to undreamed of proportions. He sat up nearly all night, busy with this profitless and miserable consideration, and memory brought him one proof after another to pillar his suspicion. And the conclusion of the matter was that Sappha's father wished her to marry St. Ange, and that in such case, even if the war was over before three years had passed, it would be in the power of the judge to forbid their marriage, as Sappha would not be of age for nearly three years. Then, when Sappha was of age, would she marry him without her father's consent? It was doubtful. Then again, might not three years more of antagonism, showing itself in every little daily household event or pleasure, wear out the tenderest, truest love? In this restless, suspicious temper he told himself that it was almost certain to do so. The fate of love is, that it always sees too little or too much. All true lovers have this madness, this enchantment, where the reason seems bound. For in love there is no prudence that can help a man, no reason that can assist him, and none that he would have. He prefers the madness which convinces him his love is more than common love. Let vulgar love know moderation, he loves out of all reason, and finds his wretchedness pleasing.

Now jealousy is only good when she torments herself, and Leonard, sitting up and losing sleep to indulge her, deserved the restless pain which he evoked. It troubled him so effectually the following day that he found it difficult to perform the work he had so enthusiastically undertaken—

that of assisting in the decorations at the City Hall for the great naval ball to be given to the officers of the war frigates in New York on New Year's Eve. He was impatient for night to come; then he would go to Judge Bloommaert's again and take good heed of every look and word, and so resolve the question that so much troubled him.

Well, we generally get the evil we expect, and so Leonard was not disappointed. There had been, as it happened, a slightly ruffled conversation during the evening meal, about an invitation just received from St. Ange. He had taken a box at the Park Theatre, and Madame Bloommaert had promised to go under his escort to see the final representation of the capture of the *Macedonian* by the *United States*. There was to be also a patriotic sketch and a farce called "Right and Wrong." The polite little note added that there was plenty of room in the box for the judge and for Mrs. and Miss Bloommaert, and begged them to accept its convenience.

The judge said "he would not go." He furthermore said, "he did not like his mother being seen so much with that young Frenchman; people would make remarks about it."

"Gerardus!"

"Just as if she had no son, or grandson, to take her to see things."

"You never do take her anywhere but to church, Gerardus; and as for Peter, I do not suppose he ever remembers her; he trusts to you and you to him. I am sure St. Ange has given her a great deal of pleasure that she would not have had from you or Peter."

"I do not approve of Christmas kept in theatres and such places. What would your father say, Carlita, about going to the theatre on Christmas night? We have always kept Christmas at church, and as a religious festival."

"This is a different Christmas. It is a patriotic festival, as well as a religious one, this year. Mother naturally wants to see the sailors and the battle transparency, and hear the songs and feel the throbbing of the great heart of the city. You ought to go with her."

"Who taught you to say 'ought' to me, Carlita?"

"My heart and my conscience."

"Well, if you get behind your conscience, I am dumb. Go with mother—if you wish."

"No. Mr. St. Ange goes with her. You must go with Sappha and I, or——"

"I am busy. I cannot go."

"I am sorry. I must ask Leonard Murray then."

"Oh, what diplomats women are! I suppose I must go, but I do wish Mr. St. Ange would be less attentive to my family."

"He may yet be more so. Annette considers herself as——"

"There, there, wife! Don't say it, and then you will not have to unsay it."

This refusal to listen to Annette's considerations put a stop to the discussion. The judge took a book of travels and affected to be lost in its matter and marvels, and Mrs. Bloommaert found it impossible to get him to resume the conversation and finish it with more satisfactory decision. Finally she said: "I do wish, Gerardus, you would talk to us a little. There are many things I want to ask you about."

"Not to-night, Carlita."

"Of course we are going to the naval ball, and preparations specially for it must be made. Why do you not answer me, Gerardus?"

"My dear Carlita, no husband ever repented of having held his tongue. I am in no mood to talk to-night."

"You promised Sappha that pearl necklace."

"Hum-m-m!"

"And I cannot lend her mine, as I shall want to wear it."

There was no answer, but then silence answers much; and Mrs. Bloommaert, considering her husband's face, felt that she had begun to win. He was evidently pondering the position, for he was not reading. During this critical pause Leonard Murray entered. He was aware at once of the constrained atmosphere, and with the egotism of jealousy he attributed it to his sudden appearance. For once he was really *de trop*. He interrupted an important decision, and Mrs. Bloommaert was annoyed. Under cover of his entry, and the slight commotion it caused, the judge resumed his reading. "I must ask your indulgence, Mr. Murray," he said politely, "but I am just now accompanying Mr. James Bruce in search of the sources of the Nile; and it is not easy to live between Egypt and the Bowling Green."

Leonard said he understood, and would be sorry to interrupt a mental trip so much to Judge Bloommaert's taste. But he did not understand—not at all. He was mortified at his reception, and he had not that domestic instinct which would have taught him that the constraint he felt was of a family nature and did not include him. In his present sensitive, jealous mood he believed the judge was reading because he preferred reading to his society—that Mrs. Bloommaert was silent and restless because, in some way, he had interfered; and that Sappha's shy, abortive efforts to restore a cheerful, confidential feeling were colder and more perfunctory than he had ever before seen them.

In this latter estimate he was partly correct. Sappha was as eager and anxious about the visit to the theatre and the naval ball as it was natural a girl of eighteen years old should be, and Leonard had interrupted discussion at a critical point; had put off settlements about dresses and various other important items—and besides this fault had brought into the room with him an atmosphere very different from his usual light-hearted mood, explaining itself by interesting political or social news. For once he was quite absorbed in Leonard Murray, and then nobody seemed to care about Leonard Murray. Mrs. Bloommaert asked him questions about the decorations, and Sappha about the people who were assisting with them, and he simply answered, without adding any of his usual amusing commentaries.

In a short time Mrs. Bloommaert left the room, and as the judge appeared to be lost in the sources of the Nile Leonard was practically alone with Sappha. He first asked her to practise some songs with him, but she answered, " The parlour is unwarmed and unlighted, Leonard, and I do not want to take cold, just when the holidays are here."

" Certainly not," he said, but the refusal was a fresh offence. Why had Sappha not ordered fire and light to be put in the parlour? She usually did. Something was interesting her more than his probable visit—what could it be? Not the theatre—not the naval ball. Sappha was used to such affairs; he had never known them put the whole house out of temper before. For by this time he had decided the atmosphere was one of bad temper, without considering for a moment that it was possibly his own bad temper.

Suddenly he rose and said he must go; and no one asked him to remain longer. Sappha felt the constraint of her father's presence, and did not accompany him to the hall. Mrs. Bloommaert was opening and shutting drawers and doors upstairs, and the judge only gave to his " Good-night, judge," a civil equivalent in " Good-night, Mr. Murray." As he was leaving the house he saw Mr. St. Ange approaching it, and instead of advancing to meet him he turned southward towards Stone Street. Of this cowardly step he was soon ashamed, and he went back and forced himself to pass the Bloommaert house. It had a more happy aspect. Some one had stirred the logs, and the dancing flames showed through the dropped white shades. There was a movement also in the room; the sound of voices, and once he could have sworn he heard Sappha laugh. Did he not know her laugh among a thousand? It was like the tinkle of a little bell.

For at least a quarter of an hour he tormented himself with the pictures his imagination drew of what was passing behind that illuminated screen. Then he went gloomily to his room and sat down with jealousy, and began to count up his suspicions. A miserable companion is jealousy! And a miserable tale of wrongs she gave him to reckon up. But at least he reached one truth in that unhappy occupation—it was, that the engagement between Sappha and himself ought to be immediately made public. All their little misunderstandings, all his humiliations, had come through their relationship being kept secret. He felt that he was missing much of the pleasure of his wooing; certainly he was deprived of the *éclat* that it ought to have brought him. It was all wrong! All wrong! And it must be put right at once. He promised himself he would see to that necessity the first thing he did in the morning.

With this promise his insurgent heart suffered him to sleep a little, yet sleep did him no good. He awoke with the same consuming fever of resentment. He could not eat, nor yet drink; he had no use for anything but thought: jealous thought, with that eternal hurry of the soul that will not suffer rest—thoughts of love and sorrow, starting in every direction from his unhappy heart, to find out some hope, and meeting only suspicion, anger, and despair. It was his first experience of that egotistical malady,

> "whose torment, no men sure
> But lovers and the damned endure."

And he was astonished and dismayed at his suffering.

But few men suffer patiently; they are usually quick for their own relief, and accordingly very early the following morning Leonard made an excuse for calling on Sappha. Mrs. Bloommaert had gone, however, to Nassau Street, and he did not need to urge the excuse prepared. He launched at once into his wrongs and his sufferings; and indeed the latter had left some intelligible traces. Sappha was moved by his pale face and troubled eyes to unusual sympathy; but this did not suffice. He felt that the only way to prevent a recurrence of the night's suffering was to insist upon a public acknowledgment of his rights as her accepted lover, and he told Sappha this in no equivocal words.

She was distressed by his passion and evident distraction, but she would not listen for a moment to his proposal to explain their position to her father that night. And his eager entreaties finally roused in her something like anger. "You are too selfish, Leonard," she said, "and please do not make your love for me the excuse for your selfishness. You must be happy, no matter who is unhappy. Could you have picked out in the whole year a time more unpropitious, more inopportune, than this very week? Every person who has any patriotic feeling gives up all their interest to our country for the next few days. Christmas and New Year's holidays have claims we cannot forget. It is my father's holiday, his great holiday, when he throws all business cares from his mind. My mother has all manner of little domesticities and household hopes and fears and duties to attend to. Have at least a little patience! Wait until the New Year's feast is over."

"And give St. Ange another ten days full of delightful opportunities."

"St. Ange! What do you mean, Leonard? Surely you are not jealous of St. Ange. He has given you no cause whatever."

"At first he behaved with all the honour imaginable; but lately I have seen a change. He is no longer influenced by a belief in our engagement. Naturally he thinks, if it had existed, you or I would have shown some signs of so close a relationship. I have been held back on every hand, and you have not been as seclusive and exclusive as you might have been."

"Oh, Leonard! How can you?"

"You have been very kind and familiar with St. Ange. He comes here quite as much as I do. He goes out with your grandmother and mother, and often your father is seen walking on the Battery with him. He never walks with me. I do not like it. It is too much suffering! I cannot endure it."

"I heard mother come in. I will go and speak to her, Leonard."

"Do. She must see how reasonable I am."

But the moment Sappha entered her mother's room she was met by a rebuff. Mrs. Bloommaert just looked in her face, and understood; and before she had spoken half a dozen words she said with an air of resolve and annoyance. "Now, Sappha, I will hear nothing about Leonard. He has been quite unreasonable lately, and he was in a bad temper last night. Oh, yes, he was! I know bad temper when I see it."

"But, mother, this is important. He is really determined."

"Do not tell me what he is determined on, for I shall certainly repeat all you say to your father."

"He wants, dear mother, he wants——"

"Just what he cannot have; what he has no right to have—yet. He promised you to wait. I know he did. Do not tell me anything, Sappha, because I shall feel it my duty to tell your father all you say—just at this time too! It is too bad! It is exceedingly selfish and inconsiderate; and I am astonished at Leonard Murray."

"I do not think you ought to call Leonard 'selfish and inconsiderate.' He is very unhappy."

"When all the city is happy and rejoicing! Can he not put aside his own happiness for a while and rejoice with every one else? We are going to keep Christmas for the Christ's sake; we are going to honour the brave men who have done our country such honour; we are going, all of us, to think of our country and forget ourselves; and Leonard must take this very time to urge some bit of pleasure that will be his, and his only, that no one else must share——"

"You forget me, mother."

"No. I am sure you are no party to anything that is so selfishly personal. I think you would put the general good, and the general happiness, before your own satisfaction."

Then Sappha answered, "I hope you judge me rightly, mother; and I will be very firm with Leonard. Yet he seems so miserable."

"He is nursing some silly idea that in some way or other he is being wronged. This notion blots all other ideas out of recognition; he is, as I said before, suffering from selfishness; and selfishness is the worst-tempered of all vices."

"At any rate, he is wretched. Come and speak to him, mother."

"No, I will not. I have other things to do. Of course he is wretched! he ought to be, for bad temper, fortunately, bites at both ends. My advice to you is, be a little cross yourself. Dear me! How tiresome men in love are!"

To this last exclamation Sappha closed the door. She walked slowly downstairs, she lingered, she seemed unable to come to any decision. But in the midst of her uncertainty she listened to her heart, and what her heart said to her was this: "It can never be wrong to be kind." So strengthened, and even counselled, by this suggestion, she went back to her lover. He was walking about the room in a fever of self-torment, and as the door opened he turned inquiringly. And it was the loveliest of Sapphas he saw. She met him in all her charms; her eyes had a sunny radiance, her mouth was all smiles, she looked as if there was not a care in the wide world—a healing, lovesome woman, wonderfully sweet and comforting.

"Dearest one," she said softly, "sit here beside me. Let me have your hand, Leonard, and listen to me. My mother says this is the very worst time in all the year to speak to my father. He is so full of public affairs, and you know, just now, they ought to come before any private ones. Ought they not, dear?"

"Yes, of course, but——"

"Well, there can be no 'but' for a few days. Christmas is Christ's feast—we cannot presume to put ourselves before Christmas; and then come all the honours, and feasts, and public rejoicings for our dear country. You would not put yourself, nor even Sappha, before America, her honour and freedom? And so I think, with mother, we must wait until after the New Year before we say a word about ourselves. Dear, a few months, a few weeks ago, you were so happy with my assurance only. Is it less sweet now than then?"

And as she spoke more and more tenderly, aiding her words with loving glances and the light pressure of her little hand, softer thoughts flowed in, and the enchanter, love, usurped the place of every evil passion. Leonard finally promised to be happy, and to let others be happy; and he kissed this agreement on her lips. Alas!

> "Man, only, clogs with care his happiness,
> And while he should enjoy his part of bliss,
> With thoughts of what might be, destroys what is."
>
> DRYDEN.

And when Sappha had watched and smiled him out of sight she turned in with a sigh and a sudden depression of spirit. She had won Leonard to her wish and way, but anger is always self-immolation, and for a time at least Leonard had fallen in her esteem, for she was compelled to disapprove of much that he had said; and the more we judge, the less we love.

The whole affair seemed trifling to Mrs. Bloommaert; it was an annoyance in the midst of events of far more importance, and had to be got out of the way—that was all. But to Sappha it was different. She had forgiven Leonard, but unhappy is the lover whom a woman forgives; and Sappha was herself quite conscious that some virtue had gone out of her life. It was not a little event to Sappha, for there are no little events with the heart.

Fortunately Annette and St. Ange came in, and Sappha was compelled to meet them on the level of their joyous temper. They had finished decorating madame's house, and their arms were full of box and feathery hemlock and the blooms of many-coloured everlasting flowers and great bunches of the vermilion berries of the darling pyracantha shrub. They were tingling with the Christmas joy, and their ringing laughter, their jokes and snatches of song, their quips and mock reproofs of their own mirth, filled the house with the electric atmosphere of Merry Christmas. Negroes were chattering among them, raising ladders, and running messages, and the tapping of the little hammers, and the cries of admiration as the room grew to a fairy bower, was far better than the music of many instruments—it was the music of the heart.

"We ought to have had holly," said St. Ange. "There is always holly in Christmas decorations."

"The pyracantha berries are just as pretty," answered Mrs. Bloommaert, "and the pyracantha is a rapid grower, and can be cut with impunity—even with profit to the bush; but to cut holly! that is rather a cruel business. It is almost as bad as flinging the Christmas tree into the streets when it has done its whole duty."

"But, aunt Carlita, what else can be done? It is too big to keep, and——"

"I will tell you. In Germany, the home of the Christmas tree, they give it house room until Shrove Tuesday, then it is formally burned."

"Well," said Sapphira, "we are not going to have a

Christmas tree this year; my father likes far better the *Yule Klap.*"

"What an outlandish name!" exclaimed St. Ange.

"Truly so, but then, such a delightful custom!" replied Annette. "To-morrow night you will have to do your part in the Yule Klap; I hope you are prepared."

"But then, I know not."

"My aunt will tell you all about it." And Mrs. Bloommaert said: "Come now, it is easy enough. The judge will open the Christmas room, and then every one will throw their gifts into the room, crying '*Yule Klap*' in a disguised voice. The gifts may be rich or poor, but they must be wrapped in a great number of coverings, and each cover be addressed to a different person, but the person whose name is on the last cover gets the gift. The gifts are to be strictly anonymous. So then no thanks are to be given, and there can be no envious feelings awakened."

"That is charming," cried St. Ange. Then he was in a hurry to leave, but Mrs. Bloommaert insisted that he should stay and drink a glass of hot negus ere he went into the cold air. While the negro boy was bringing in a tray full of Christmas dainties, and Sappha spicing the Portugal wine, they finished the dressing of the room; and then sat down round the fire to refresh themselves.

And very soon St. Ange began to talk of certain Christmas feasts he had spent in Europe—in Madrid, at the Christmas turkey fair, amid glorious sunshine, the flower girls selling camillas and voilets; everywhere colour, beauty, music, barbarism, and dirt. At Rome in the antique fish market, always brilliantly lighted with large torches on Christmas Eve. " For I assure you," he said, " the sumptuous fish supper of that night is beyond anything that can be conceived of here." —at Naples, where Christmas is kept with confectionery, and the Toledo is a feast of sugar and sweets.

"Are then the Neapolitans so fond of confectionery?" asked Annette. " They must be very children," she added.

" They are children among sweets," he answered. "A Neapolitan noble told me that the king was ever fearing revolution; 'but,' he added, 'if he will only present every Neapolitan with a box of sweets a revolution will be impossible.' "

" I do not think a box of sweets to every American would have prevented our Revolution," said Sappha.

Every one laughed heartily at the idea, and then she pictured Washington and Putnam, and her grandfather Bloommaert's reception of these peace offerings. And the scene was so funnily enacted that no one could help laughing heartily at it. Yet in the very climax of the hilarious chorus Sappha had a heavy heart; her mirth was only from the lips outward. However, it seemed only too real to Leonard, who entered suddenly while the peal of laughter was at its height. And he was so totally unexpected that the moment's sudden silence which followed was the most natural consequence; especially as it ended in a rush of inquiries and exclamations.

"So glad to see you!"

"Come and sit down, and have a glass of hot negus."

"What good fortune sent you?"

"Is there any strange news?" And then Mrs. Bloommaert's rather stiff question: "Is anything wrong, Leonard?"

Leonard turned to her at once. "No, indeed," he answered. "I met the judge at the City Hall and he asked me to bring you this letter. I think he expects to be detained. He was just going on to an important committee. If there is any answer, I will carry it, if you wish me to do so."

And as Mrs. Bloommaert read the letter Sappha brought him some spiced wine, but he would not take it. He said "he was going back to complete some decorations, whose position required a very clear head and steady foot." But he knew in his heart that it was no fear of danger made him refuse the proffered cup of good-will. It was jealousy that whispered to him: "The cup was not mingled for you. There was no thought of you in it. Others were expected and prepared for, and you were not even told." Under the influence of such thoughts he was constrained and quite unlike himself, and an effectual destroyer of happiness. An uncomfortable silence, broken by bungling attempts to restore the natural mirth he had disturbed, were not happy efforts. He made himself an intruder, and then blamed every one else for the position he had taken voluntarily, through his own misconception. Sappha was painfully aware of the constraint, and she wished for once that Annette would open her generally ready stream of badinage. But Annette was busy advising, in a somewhat private detail, St. Ange concerning his part of the game of *Yule Klap;* and St. Ange, having received her instructions while Leonard was waiting, rose when Leonard did, and proposed to walk part of the way with him.

"You will call this evening, will you not?" asked Sappha timidly, as they stood by a little table full of mysterious packages.

"It will be impossible," he answered. "Every part of the decorations are in my charge, and I have a great deal to attend to."

"To-morrow is Christmas Eve. You will be here for the *Yule Klap?*"

"If I am wanted!"

"Oh, Leonard! If you are wanted! If you are not present I shall not care for anything, or any one else."

"Then I will come, dearest." This conversation had been held, almost in whispers, as Sappha was supposed to be showing Leonard some of the *Yule Klap* offerings she was preparing. Then the young men went away together, but the ocean between them could not really have set them more apart. St. Ange made several attempts to open a conversation on *Yule Klap.* He wanted Leonard's advice about the gifts most suitable; but Leonard professed both ignorance and indifference concerning a game so childish; and at Vaarick

Street St. Ange, having failed completely to evoke anything like friendly intercourse, bid him good-morning. He was worried over his friend's evident displeasure; and over his own failure to either account for or dispel it. He went westward to Greenwich Street, and having made many purchases in the most fashionable stores, rather wearily returned to his rooms at the City Hotel. He was depressed and had a premonition of trouble.

After this little cloud the Christmas festivities went on with unalloyed pleasure. Madame and Annette were to stay at the Bowling Green house until Saturday, and when the judge saw his mother's delight in her anticipated visit to the theatre on Christmas night he had no heart to say one opposing word. But Sappha was not now so eager. She felt sure that in Leonard's present temper he would not like her to be the guest of St. Ange, and she resolved to forego the pleasure. "I shall have a little headache in the morning, and it will grow worse towards night, and I shall beg to be left at home that I may sleep it away. I do not think it will be wrong," she mused. "There is not room in the box St. Ange has taken but for six; and if there was room, I am sure Leonard would not accept the invitation to join us. Well, then, it is better to make an excuse than to make trouble. Why did not Leonard rent a box? He might have thought of it just as well as St. Ange. I wish I knew what it is best, what it is right, to do."

To such troubled thoughts she fell asleep, and when she awoke in the morning the weather had settled the matter for her. It was bitterly cold, and a furious snowstorm was blocking up the pathways and making a visit to the theatre beyond a safe or pleasant probability. Madame sadly admitted the condition, but the day went happily forward; and about two o'clock Leonard and St. Ange and Peter arrived, and the judge opened the Christmas room, and then there was two hours of pure mirth—of surprise without end; of beautiful gifts whose donors were to speculate about; half-guesses sent into conscious faces; questions asked with beaming eyes; all the delightful uncertainties which love could make, and love alone unravel. The Christmas dinner followed, and after it a dance, which madame, with Peter for her partner, opened. Every one joined in it, and the merriest of evenings was thus inaugurated. So nobody regretted the theatre, not even madame, for she had been privately informed by St. Ange that the box was reserved for the great naval performance on the seventh of January; and that it would be one far more worth seeing, one never to be forgotten. And madame kept this bit of anticipatory pleasure as a little secret, and was as gay as a child over it.

Leonard also was in his most charming mood, and Sappha was divinely happy; her beauty was enchanting, and her manner so mild and sweet that she diffused on all hands a sense of exquisite peace and felicity. For Leonard had whispered to her such words of contrition and devotion as erased totally and forever the memory of his unworthy temper and suspicions. And after that confession there could be only sorrow for his fault, and delight in pardoning and forgetting it.

All throughout the following week he preserved this sunny mood. He was undoubtedly very busy, for the naval dinner was to be given on the twenty-ninth of December, and he was the director of the committee of young men who were turning the great dining room of the City Hotel into a marine palace. It was his taste which colonnaded it with the masts of ships wreathed with laurel and all the national flags of the world—except that of Great Britain. It was Leonard who devised the greensward, in the midst of which was a real lake, and floating on it a miniature United States war frigate.

It was Leonard, also, who hung behind the dais on which Mayor Clinton, Decatur, Hall, and the officers of the navy were to sit, the mainsail of a ship thirty-three feet by sixteen, on which the American eagle was painted, holding in his beak a scroll bearing these significant words: "Our children are the property of our country." There were many other transparencies to attend to; besides which, every table was to bear a miniature warship with American colours displayed. And to the five hundred gentlemen of New York, who sat down to the dinner served in that room, these were no childish symbols. They were the palpable, visible signs of a patriotism that meant freedom or death, and nothing less.

In the midst of all the business connected with such preparations, in a time when the things wanted were not always procurable, and had to be supplied by the things that could be obtained, Leonard—whose heart was hot in his work of patriotism—was naturally very busy and very much occupied with the work on hand. Yet he found time sufficient to see Sappha often enough to convince her he had not fallen away from the promise he had made her—"to harbour no unworthy suspicions of any one who loved him."

At length New Year's Eve arrived. More than three hundred of New York's loveliest women had been for weeks preparing for it, and all were eager for the pleasure it promised them.

The Bloommaert party, consisting of the judge, Mrs. Bloommaert, Sappha, and Annette, were early arrivals; and Leonard, who was one of the directors, met them at the door. And he looked so noble, and so handsome, and his manner was so fine and gracious, that even Judge Bloommaert was impressed by his personality, and returned his greeting with unusual warmth. But then, as Leonard reflected, any man who failed in politeness, or even in cordiality, in the presence of three such lovely women as Sappha, Annette, and Mrs. Bloommaert, would surely be something less than human.

Mrs. Bloommaert's beauty was yet in its ripe perfection. She was as the full blown rose that has not yet dropped a single leaf. She wore a gown of white satin covered with a netting of gold thread; and there was a string of pearls round her throat, and a large comb in form the braids and bows of her glossy black hair. She carried in her hand a little fan of exquisite workmanship, and used it with a grace that no woman in the room, old or young, could imitate.

Sappha's gown was of white satin of so rich a quality that any trimming on it would have been vulgar and superfluous. Her sandals also were of white satin; and in her beautiful, brown hair there was one white rose; and round her slender throat the necklace of pearls which had come to her among the gifts of the *Yule Klap*. Annette was dressed in a slip of pale blue satin, covered with white gauze of the most transparent quality; a very mist of white over a little cloud of pale blue. Her sandals were blue, and she wore a necklace of turquoise stones cut in the shape of stars and united by a tiny ornament of frosted silver. Her hair hung free, and was loosely curled and confined by a simple band of blue ribbon.

And if Sappha, with her "eyes grey-lit in shadowing hair above," seemed to wear Love's very vesture with just that touch of pride that made men wonder and revere, Annette was like a Love from Greuze's dainty brush—a laughing, dancing, teasing, mocking fairy. Achille was constantly hovering around her, and this evident admiration and attention Sappha was careful to point out to Leonard.

The dance begun at nine o'clock, and at eleven supper was served in a room fitted up like the great cabin of a ship of the line; but after supper dancing was resumed, and continued until nearly two o'clock in the morning. Then reluctantly the happy crowd went to their homes to rest, for it was then New Year's Day, always a busy, fatiguing anniversary —a day which every one felt it a duty to consecrate to friendship and hospitality.

Indeed, in Judge Bloommaert's household there was barely time for a little sleep before the parlours were crowded with callers; and all of them brought but one topic of conversation—the arrival of the captive British war vessel, the *Macedonian*. For her conqueror had brought her as far as Hell Gate the day previous, in order that she might arrive on the first of January, and be presented to New York as a "New Year's Gift." And, as if good fortune was pleased with this honour to her favourite city, the very breeze that was needed sprang up, and at the very moment it was needed; and amid the shouting crowds that lined the banks of the East River, the captive vessel was taken to the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

"I had the heart-ache for her," said Leonard. "She carried herself so proudly. I bethought me of how she had borne the living fury of the elements, and the living fury of fiery battle, and I lifted my hat a moment to the wounded ship in her humiliation, just as I would have done to any great soldier or sailor, if I saw them marched between shouting enemies, manacled and helpless." And at these words the judge regarded him silently; and there was a quivering fire in Sappha's eyes as she said softly: "You felt as the brave always feel in the presence of a fallen enemy. You remember the motto of the old Plantagenet knights—'Honour to the vanquished!'"

"I remember. You told me that once before. Do you know your brother Peter would not look at her?"

"That was strange," said Mrs. Bloommaert. "What was the matter with Peter?"

"Peter always looks on a ship as a woman, and he cannot bear to see her in distress."

"It is a strange feeling, that, between ships and ship men," said Dr. Smith. "Sailors all give them consciousness and sympathy, and it is a common thing to hear them say of any craft, 'she behaves well.' Captain Tim Barnard of the privateer *General Armstrong,* when chasing an enemy, talks to his ship, as an Arabian to his horse; urges her, entreats her to put forth all her speed, makes her promises of additional guns, or a new flag, and, what is more, he firmly believes she understands and obeys him."

"Well," answered the judge, "every one I know connected with shipping speaks as commonly and as naturally of the average life of a ship as they do of the average life of a sailor."

"Once," said Achille, "when I was in England I watched from the cliff a ship in danger. She flashed out signals of distress, and her minute guns sounded like the cries of some living creature, and as I looked and listened I saw men running to some boats that were lying half-alive on their stocks, and in a moment they were in the raving, raging sea. Boats and men seemed alike eager and pitiful. And the gallant ship! She was like a mother in extremity—if she must go, she entreated that her sons might be saved."

"Were they?"

"Yes, all of them; but the next morning her figure-head, looking seaward wistfully, was lying on the beach; and her broken rudder beside it. They were sadder than spoken words. No one saw the ship die. She went down to her grave alone—but I think she was glad of that."

"Come, come then," said Peter, who had entered during this conversation, "we need not go so far afield for splendid facts. Let us remember the nineteenth of last August, when Captain Isaac Hull wounded to death the fine British man-of-war *Guerrière*. It was seen at once that her case was hopeless, and the *Constitution* watched by her all night, and removed not only all her men, but also all their private possessions. On the morning of the twentieth she was ready for her grave. A slow match was applied to her magazine, and the *Constitution* bore away. At a safe distance she hove to, and the officers and men of both ships stood watching. The guns which had been left shotted.soon began to go off. They were the death knells of the dying man-of-war. Presently the flames reached the magazine, a mass of wreckage flew skyward. The *Guerrière* was no more. But William

Storey, who was present, told me every man stood bareheaded as she sank, and that her officers wept, while some of her men blubbered like children."

"Thank you, Peter," said the judge. "It is a good thing to hear that Hull was so noble to his prisoners."

"As for that," continued Peter, "there wasn't a touch of ill-will on either side, after the fight was over. Storey said the prisoners and captors sat around the fok'sle together, telling yarns, exchanging tobacco and many little courtesies. Hull is too brave a man to fear brave men. Some captains might have handcuffed the crew, not so Hull; and, indeed, every American sailor on the *Constitution* felt a manly unwillingness to handcuff enemies who had fought so bravely."

"Sappha," said the judge, "I have heard Mr. Murray singing with you at intervals this afternoon and evening a verse or two that you were setting to a wonderful bit of music. Try it again, my dear."

"It is *The March of the Men of Moray,* father. Mr. Murray wrote two or three verses to it about the *Macedonia.* Come, Leonard," and she struck a few ringing chords and looked inspiration into his bending face. Then out rang the little ballad to the marching music of his clan:

> What will they say in England,
>   When the story there is told,
> Of Commodore Decatur,
>   And his sailor men so bold?

They'll say it was a gallant fight,
And fairly lost and won;
So honour to the sailor men,
By whom the deed was done!

What will they say in England?
They'll say with grateful lip,
Now glory to Almighty God,
No Frenchman took the ship!

No Frenchman shot her colours down!
The doomed ship had this grace—
To take her death blow from the hands
Of men of the English race!

And all good honest men and true
Will pray for war to cease;
And merchant ships go to-and-fro
On messages of peace.

And men-of-war sail on the land,
And soldiers plough the sea,
Ere brothers fight, who ought to dwell
In love and unity.

"Thank you, Mr. Murray," said the judge. "'Tis a stirring melody!"

"'Tis the march of my forefather's clan, sir."

"And you have said for America, and for England, what they deserve. We both love fair play; and I am sure both nations know how to take, either a victory or a defeat, like men, and gentlemen. God make honourable peace between us, and that right early!"

To this pious wish the company remaining, departed; but after Leonard had made his long, sweet adieu, Sappha heard her father gently tapping on the table the time of *"The March of the Men of Moray,"* as in pleasant thoughtfulness he hummed to its music,

"They'll say it was a gallant fight,
And fairly lost and won,
So honour to the sailor men,
By whom the deed was done!

CHAPTER
SIX

The Miracle of Love

THERE had been something more than courtesy in Judge Bloommaert's attitude to Leonard that New Year's night, and Sappha was exceedingly happy to notice it. If Leonard would only be careful and conciliating, such favour might be won as would make an acknowledgment of their engagement pleasantly possible. As it was, Sappha was light-hearted and hopeful, for surely now Leonard would wait the natural development of events.

And for a few days the subject was not named; Sappha was busy helping her mother to put in order the numerous household goods and affairs that had been disarranged by the licence of the holidays, and Leonard also had some unusual business, the nature of which he promised to reveal before the week was over. New Year's Day fell that year on a Friday, and on the Tuesday following it Sappha went to visit her grandmother and cousin. It was a sunshiny, winter day, and the old house on Nassau Street had such an antique, handsome homelikeness, as made far finer dwellings look common and vulgar in comparison with it. Madame sat by the blazing fire writing letters; Annette was marking new towels with the Blooommaert initials; but when she saw Sappha at the gate she put away her work and ran to meet her.

Then there was no more writing, and no more sampler letters; the three women sat down to "talk things over." And when the *Yule Klap* presents and the New Year's feasts had been discussed, they drifted very naturally to the guests and to their dressing and conversation. Madame enjoyed it all, and the morning passed quickly and pleasantly away.

"Grandmother has a secret, Sappha, and I cannot coax it from her," said Annette. Then she laid her hand upon madame's, and added: "Now that Sappha is here, do tell us both, grandmother."

"Until Thursday morning I will not tell you," she answered. "Do you wish me to break my promise? That is not my way."

"You promised Achille, eh, grandmother? Oh, I see that I have guessed correctly—you are smiling, grandmother, and you cannot help it—so then, it is something Achille is going to do! Very well, Achille shall tell me. I shall insist upon it."

They joked, and wondered about "grandmother's secret," and ineffectually begged to share it, until dinner was over; then madame went to her room, and the girls dropped the subject at once—they had more interesting matter to discuss.

"Have you seen Leonard since the New Year?" asked Annette. "How delightfully he conducted himself! How charmingly he sang and talked! I do believe that uncle Gerardus was quite impressed by his intelligence. He is very handsome also—does he still make love to you, Sappha?"

"He would not be in the fashion if he omitted the fine words all the young men say nowadays. I might as well ask you if Achille flatters the fair Annette in the same silly way?"

"Do you think it silly? I think it is heavenly sweet, and quite proper. Yes, the dear Achille continually invents new names for me. The 'fair Annette' is out of date. I am now his 'Heart's Desire!' I am afraid he is distractingly in love with me."

"But why do you fear it? Are you not in love with the dear Achille?"

"I fear it, because I am sure that I am life or death to him; and I am not quite sure that I am in love with any one—it is such a responsibility. Are you in love with Leonard?"

"What is the use of being in love, when you cannot marry for nearly three years. I have promised father and mother not to engage myself to any one until after the war."

"How foolish! Such silly promises ought to be broken—are made to be broken. Does Leonard want to marry you?"

"I wish you would ask him. In so many ways Leonard is inscrutable. He has some business on hand now that he is keeping a secret. I think secrets are in the air. Pray, when will you marry Achille? Or has he not asked you yet?"

"My dear Sappha, he is the most sensitive of mortals. He says love should not be talked about—it makes it common; takes off all the bloom and glory from Cupid's wings; just as handling the butterfly makes it crushed and shabby. I think he is right. Achille does not need to talk, he says such things with his soft black eyes that perhaps he had better not say with his beautiful red lips. However, his lips are not as prudent as they might be."

"Oh, Annette! Do you really mean that he has kissed you?—and yet you are not engaged."

"Suppose it is so! I do not feel a whit the worse for it. I am going to be Mrs. St. Ange. I have made up my mind on that subject."

"But Achille?"

"That is settled. I intend to marry him. Some people will say I am making a poor match—because, you know, I shall have a great deal of property and money; but I do not intend to listen to any one's opinion."

"But Achille has not really asked you to be his wife?"

"That is nothing. He will do so the very hour I am ready to accept him. I put the question off until after the holidays, because one can never tell what might happen at New Year's."

"Were you expecting anything to happen?—anything unforeseen, Annette?"

"Well, I thought young Washington Irving might come home at Christmas, and I wanted to see him again. I felt sure you knew that I have been considering him."

"He loved Matilda Hoffman."

"I know that, of course. But after she—withdrew, I felt that it might be my office to comfort him. He looked so charming, and so sorrowful."

"I have not seen him lately," said Sappha.

"He went to Philadelphia about some magazine he is editing; but I heard that he is coming back to board with Mrs. Ryckman. His great friend, Harry Brevoort, told Achille so. However, I have given Mr. Irving quite up. I don't think I could take any interst in the Analectic Magazine; though I am sure I cannot imagine what an Analectic Magazine is like. But then, as Achille says, I have no occasion to know such things. I rather think it is something dreadful—it might be a doctor's magazine. I believe Mr. Irving thought of being a doctor."

"I certainly believe you would find Achille more agreeable to you than Mr. Irving."

"Achille is so wonderfully polite. You cannot make him forget his fine manners—and grandmother is very fond of him. She does not like Mr. Irving. She thinks his 'History of New York,' a piece of great impertinence—and I wish to please grandmother, for several reasons."

In such conversation they passed the afternoon, until madame came back to them, Sappha always skilfully parry-ing Annette's point blank questions, by others just as direct; and in this way easily leading her cousin to personal subjects of far superior interest to her—that is, her own lovers and love affairs. Just before madame's tea hour Leonard came. He was in the highest possible spirits, and carried himself as if something very important had happened to him; as, indeed, it had.

He said he had been at the Bowling Green, and found no one at home. Mrs. Bloommaert had gone to drink a cup of tea with Mrs. Jane Renwick, and hear her talk of "poor Robert Burns," who had sung of her as *The Blue-Eyed Lassie.*

"Well, then, now we shall find out if Mr. Washington Irving is in New York, or is likely to be here; for he certainly could not be in the city a day without going to see Jane Renwick," said Annette.

"What does Sapphira Bloommaert or Annette de Vries want with Mr. Washington Irving?" asked madame. "Has he not turned the respectable Dutch of New York into ridicule—made people to laugh at their homely ways. Such laughter is not good for them, nor yet for us."

"We were just wondering about him, grandmother—you know he is a possibility now."

"Annette De Vries!"

"For American girls, I mean. I was telling Sappha that little Mary Sanford is quite willing to comfort the widowed lover."

"Such silly chatter is this! Leonard, have you news more sensible?"

"I think I have, madame. In the first place, there is to be such a play at the Park Theatre on Thursday night as never has been seen, nor is ever likely to be seen again. I went to the Bowling Green to ask Mrs. Bloommaert and Sappha to come to my box, and now I come here to tell you. There is room there also for you madame, and for Annette. I hope you will do me the great honour to accept my invitation;" and he rose and bowed to madame first, and then with a charming exaggeration to Sappha and Annette.

Madame put off answering for herself and Annette, but Sappha accepted the invitation with delight; and in the conversation incident to this proposal, and the asides springing readily from it, the daylight faded and the good supper was brought in and thoroughly enjoyed. Then the table was cleared, and the hearth swept, and the candles placed on the high chimney piece, where their light did not weary madame's eyes; and the little company drew their chairs within the comfort line of the blazing fire.

Annette was a little quieter than seemed natural, but then Achille had not called. The day was slipping away without his customary devotion, and Sappha was present to notice this remissness; it was, therefore, very annoying, for Annette felt its contradiction after her little fanfaronade about her power over the impassioned, sensitive Achille St. Ange.

Suddenly Leonard seemed to take a resolve, or else the news he had to tell urged him beyond restraint. He looked at Sappha with a demanding interest, and then said: "Madame, I remember that you once asserted all young men ought to have either a business or a profession, if only to keep them out of mischief. I have this day concluded to begin the study of the law. I hope I may thus be kept out of mischief."

"Come, now, you have done a wise thing, Leonard; I am glad of what you say."

"I feel quite satisfied, madame, that I have done right—done what my dear father would approve, if he were alive to direct me. And yet, at last, I acted without taking much thought or advice on the subject."

"That also may be a wise thing, Leonard. Young men sometimes take more thought than is good for purpose—they think and think till they cannot act."

"As I say, the resolve came suddenly. I had a large bill to pay two days ago for business connected with my real estate; and as I looked at it I thought, Why not do this business myself? Half an hour afterwards Mr. King said this same thing to me; and I went home and considered the subject. Then I called on several good business men and asked them who was the best real estate lawyer in the city."

"Real estate!" cried madame, "then you are not going to study criminal law?"

"No, no! I want to know all about the laws regulating the buying and selling of property, leasing, mortgaging, renting, and so on—what tenants ought to do, and what landlords ought to do—don't you see, madame?" He said "madame," but he looked at Sappha, who was watching him with an expression more speculative than approving.

"Yes," answered madame, "I see. And your idea is a very prudent one. Listen, if a good teacher on this subject you want, go and article yourself to Seth Vanderlyn. What he does not know about real estate is not worth knowing."

"Oh, I have done better than Seth Vanderlyn! I am going to read with Aaron Burr! What do you think of that? The most learned, the most delightful, the most eminent of all living lawyers. I am really so excited at my good fortune I know not what to say. Mr. King and Mr. Read and several other men of affairs and experience told me I had selected a lawyer who had no compeer in land and property business. In such respect they all said I had done well, and for other matters, I was the best judge. I suppose they referred to Mr. Burr's duelling episode."

Sappha's face expressed only dismay and distress. She had neither a word nor a smile for Leonard's great news. He turned to Annette. She was lost in the contemplation of her feet—which were small and beautifully shod, and she silently turned them in and out, as if their perfect fit was the present question of importance. Madame's brows were drawn together, and there was a look of uncertainty on her face. In a moment of time Leonard saw all these different signs of disapproval and dislike. His face flushed with anger, and he continued in a tone of offence:

"I thought you would all rejoice with me. I thought you would at least commend the step I had taken—I——"

"It is no good step for you," answered madame in a voice of regret. "If with bad men you go you are counted one with them; if with doomed men you go, you catch misfortune from them."

"I do not understand what you mean, madame."

"Leonard," interrupted Sappha, "you have not asked my father's opinion? If you had, you would never have taken this foolish step."

"Foolish step?" Why, Sappha, every one to whom I have named my purpose thinks me fortunate. And if you only knew Mr. Burr you would confess it an enormous privilege to be under his advice and tuition. He is the most fascinating of men."

"Fascinating! Yes, that is right," said madame. "His charm I know well. But listen to me, Leonard Murray, this is a fascination to be thrown off—it is no good for you. All of your friends, do you wish to lose?"

"Yes, if they are so foolish as to leave me because, wanting instruction, I have chosen the best of masters."

"Well, then, say also, the most unpopular man in New York."

"Indeed, madame, you are mistaken," answered Leonard warmly. "I do not know a more popular man than Mr. Burr in New York to-day. No lawyer has a larger practice, and during the few hours I passed in his office the last two days I saw there the most honourable and influential of our citizens. Every one treated him with respect, and it is a fact that the first day his return to New York was known five hundred gentlemen called on him before he slept that night. It is also a fact that within twelve days after he nailed up his sign in Nassau Street he received two thousand dollars in cash fees. His business is now large and lucrative, and no one but those stupid Tory Federalists are against him."

"My father is a stupid Tory Federalist, Leonard," said Sappha coldly.

"Oh, how unfortunate I am! I do nothing but make mistakes to-night. Poor Mr. Burr! A majority of our great men have fought duels; is Mr. Burr to be the scapegoat of all American duellists? De Witt Clinton, though his enemy, admits that no man ever received provocation so frequent, so irritating, so injurious, and so untruthful, as Burr received from Alexander Hamilton. My dear friends, I assure you that Burr has more defenders than his victim."

"Very likely," replied Sappha with a remarkable show of temper, "a great many people prefer a living dog to a dead lion."

"I thought I was sure of your sympathy, Sappha," answered Leonard, and as he uttered these words Annette rose up hastily, clapped her hands together, and said: "Thank goodness, I hear Achille St. Ange's footsteps! Now we shall have some sensible conversation." She ran to the door and set it wide open, and Achille saw the comforting firelight, and the beautiful girl standing in its glow, waiting to welcome him. It gave him a sense of content, almost of home and love. He came in holding her hand; his black fur cloak throwing into remarkable significance the pallor of his haughty, handsome face, lighted by eyes of intense blackness and brilliancy.

Leonard was not pleased at what he considered the intrusion, but Achille's fine manners and the easy tone of his conversation were really a welcome relief to the uncomfortable strain introduced by the Burr topic. Achille was cheery and agreeable, and had plenty of those little critical things to say of acquaintances every one likes to hear—critical, but not unkindly so. This night, also, he was even unusually handsome, and his sumptuous dress only in the diapason of the general air of luxury which was the distinguishing quality of his life.

To the gay persiflage of his conversation madame paid little attention. She was lost in thoughtful reminiscence, and when she re-entered the society of those around her she returned to the conversation which the entrance of Achille had interrupted.

"I have been taking thought, Leonard," she said, "and I wonder me at you! Of good days are you tired? If so, then join yourself to Aaron Burr. I am not pleased that you should do this, but so, nothing will help, I fear—at least no ordinary advice."

"Is not that a hard thing to say, madame?"

"Very well, but it is the truth. So then, to make short work of it, no ordinary advice will I give you; but an extraordinary reason, that may perhaps turn your mind another way. I know not—there are none so blind as those who will not see."

"First, madame, permit me to ask Mr. St. Ange, in your presence, if he thinks I require either ordinary or extraordinary arguments against the course I have marked out for myself."

Madame moved her head in assent, and then Leonard, in a few sentences, told Achille of his proposed study with Mr. Burr, and asked him frankly "if he considered Mr. Burr's duelling experience inimical to business relations with him?"

And Achille answered promptly: "If Mr. Burr had not fought Mr. Hamilton I should consider your engagement with him disastrous, both to your social and business reputation. Mr. Hamilton had slandered Mr. Burr in public and in private, and even while Mr. Burr supposed him to be his friend he had disseminated the unguarded sallies of his host while a guest at his dinner table. As I understand the subject, Mr. Burr had no alternative between two inexorable facts—to fight, which might mean physical death; not to fight, which would certainly mean social and political death. Mr. Burr had, I think, a too great patience. I would have appealed to the sword to stop the tongue long before Mr. Burr did."

Leonard was delighted and grateful, and said so, and Achille added: "We must remember that Cheetham, who edited Hamilton's newspaper, asked the public through that organ: 'Is the Vice-President sunk so low as to submit to be insulted by General Hamilton?' It seems to me then that Cheetham really sent the challenge to Mr. Burr, and that the Vice-President had no honourable alternative. He had to fight or be eternally branded a poltroon, a dastardly coward!" And he uttered these shameful words with such passionate scorn that they seemed to disturb the air like wildfire.

"About duelling there may be two opinions," said Madame, "but when treason is the question, what then?"

"But that question was settled by Mr. Burr's trial, madame," answered Leonard. "The law and the testimony, the judge, and the jury decided that Mr. Burr was not guilty of treason. Should we go behind that settlement?"

"The people have gone behind it, and will do so."

"I doubt that as a final result," said Leonard. "Many are of Mr. Vanderlyn's opinion, that the natural boundaries of the United States are the Atlantic and Pacific, and that all foreign authority must be got rid of within that territory. If Aaron Burr did not succeed, he thought others would."

"But Aaron Burr would have set up a monarchy for himself."

"That is not conceivable, madame. I said so to Mr. Vanderlyn, and he laughed at the idea. He said, 'Burr had remarkable military genius, and that his object was to atone for his political failure by some great military feat, but whatever the feat he contemplated, it would have been in the end for his country.' Vanderlyn put aside all evidence to the contrary, because given by men who had been at first confederate with Burr, and then betrayed him. What reliance could be placed on anything such men said? I believe," said Leonard, with confident fervour, "that Mr. Burr will outlive the memory of his faults and attain yet the success his great abilities deserve."

"*He will not!*" said madame. "The hatred of the living a man may fight, and hope to conquer, but the vengeance of the dead, who then can escape that? Sooner or later it drives 'the one followed' to destroy himself. This trouble began twelve years gone by. Hamilton and Burr called it to themselves, that night they tricked justice, slandered the innocent, and let the guilty go free. Snuff the candles, Achille, the room is full of shadows; more light give us, and I will tell you when, and how, the doom of both men was called to them."

There was a few minutes' delay, during which the silence was unbroken, and then madame continued:

"It was in the year of God eighteen hundred, in the month of March, and we had come near to the spring. Mr. Hamilton was then of all the lawyers in New York the most famous, and it was one of the sights of the city to see him going to court with his papers and books. In that month came the trial of Levi Weekes for the murder of the beautiful Gulielma Sands, and Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Burr were united in the defence of Weekes. Very well indeed I knew Elma Sands, for she lived with her uncle and aunt Ring, who were tenants of mine for many years. At the time of her murder they lived in Greenwich Street, near Franklin; and Weekes boarded with them. He was a brother of Ezra Weekes, who kept the famous City Hotel, and with his brother he could have boarded. But not so, with the Rings he stayed, because of Elma, and every one said they were promised to each other, and when the spring came were to be married. Well, then, this dreadful thing happened—Elma Sands went out with Levi Weekes one Sunday in December, 1799, and never again was she seen by any one. Distracted were her uncle and aunt, and everywhere, far and near, Elma was sought. It was no good. What I could do, I did, for I had watched the orphan girl grow from her childhood to her womanhood, and so sorry also was I for the uncle and aunt, who slept not, nor yet rested, and whose terrible suspense was ended in five weeks, by the finding of Elma's body in a well eighty feet deep. Then the city went wild about her murder; for the appearance of the body left no room for doubt as to what poor Elma's fate had been; and every one felt quite sure that Levi Weekes was the criminal." Here madame paused and appeared to be much affected, and Achille, without a word, pushed a glass of water closer to her, and having drank of it, she continued:

"It was Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Burr that defended the prisoner; the prosecutor was Cadwallader D. Colden, and Chief Justice Lansing was the judge. On both sides there were great lawyers, and the trial was long and wearisome; but never were Elias Ring and his wife absent from it, no, not for one hour. So the end came at last. It was a stormy night in April that it came, and very late, and the court room was but dimly lighted, for some of the candles had burned themselves away, and had not been renewed, and the people had been listening to Hamilton's speech, and thinking of nothing else. A great speech it was; my son Judge Bloommaert told me it was wonderful; and though every one was worn out, none left the building.

"Then Aaron Burr arose. Some facts he set forth in such a way as to throw all suspicion on the chief witness against Weekes; and while people were amazed at the charge, and no time had been given to examine it, or deny it, he lifted two candles from the table and flashed them in the face of the man he had accused; and as he did this thing he cried out in a voice like doom: '*Gentlemen, behold the murderer!*' Shocked and terrified was the man, and like a foolish one he rushed from the room; and this cry of Aaron Burr's the weary, excited jury took for the truth, and so then, Levi Weekes was declared 'not guilty.' Stupefied were all present, and before they could recover themselves from their astonishment Catherine Ring stood up. She was a Quakeress and to speak in public accustomed, and so, lifting her face and hands to heaven she refused the verdict; and gave the case '*to the justice of God* and *the vengeance of the Dead!*'

"I say plainly, every one was thrilled with awe and terror. Her voice was low and even, but straight to every heart it went; and those furthest away heard it clear and fateful as those close at her side. Mr. Hamilton began to put up his papers, but she stepped close to his side and said: 'Alexander Hamilton, if there be justice in heaven, heaven will see that thee dies a bloody death; and thy helper shall help thee to it!' At these words Burr rose, and looked at her with a smile, and she continued, 'Take thy time, Aaron Burr. Thee need not hurry; thee will long for death, long before death will have thee. Nay, but thee shall be a dead man long before thee can hide thyself in the grave. And all that we have suffered in that long month of not knowing, thee shall suffer many times over. Dost thee think God had no witness in this room? Go thy way, Alexander Hamilton! Go thy way, Aaron Burr! There is *one that follows after!*' She turned then to Judge Lansing, but he had left the bench. Then she touched her husband's arm, and said: 'Come, Elias, the unrighteous judge cannot escape the righteous one. Some day he will go out, and be heard of no more forever.'*

"And here is the wonderful thing—all the time she was dooming these three great men not one soul moved or spoke. The entire audience sat or stood silent and motionless; and when out of the court-room they went, it was as if they were leaving a church. And Elias and Catherine Ring passed through them, and though they had the pity and respect of all there, no one spoke to them, and no one stayed them. For every word of doom Catherine Ring had uttered had been heard; and her inspired face spoke to the crowd; Elias walking at her side praying aloud as he walked.

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* In November, 1829, twenty-five years later, Judge Lansing left his hotel in New York to take steamboat for Albany, and was never seen or heard of afterward.

"My son Gerardus was present during the entire trial; he heard all, he saw all, and he told me the story I have just told you. And what I say is the truth—Hamilton's earthly doom has been fulfilled; Burr is yet learning the unpitying vengence of the dead. That insane idea of conquest, who drove him to it? Who, at the critical hour, turned his confederates against him? Who sent him to wander in Europe a degraded, desperate man? What a cup of shame and poverty he drank there, I and a few others know. Then, when reckless with his misfortune, back he comes to New York, and for a short time he is lifted up by the many old acquaintances who remember his abilities and his sufferings. But only to be cast down is he lifted up. In less than one month he hears of the death of his grandson, a beautiful, intelligent boy of twelve years old, on whom all his future hopes were built. A terrible blow it was, but only the beginning of sorrow. Six months afterwards his idolised daughter left Charleston for New York. She was heartbroken by the loss of her son, and was coming to her father to be comforted. She sailed on the thirtieth of December, 1811, A. D., and ought to have been in New York about the fifth of January. She did not come. She never came. She was never heard of again. It was then Catherine Ring's promised retribution overtook him. Who can tell what agonies of suspense he endured? There was daily hope, and there was daily despair! Such nights of grief! Such days of watching! His worst unfriends pitied him. To have heard of the unhappy woman would have pleased every one; but no, no, never a word came. When some weeks were gone over, there was a report that the ship in which she sailed had been taken by pirates, and all on board murdered except Mr. Burr's daughter. She, it was said, had been put on shore a captive. The miserable man! He would not, he could not, bear this idea. He said to me one morning, as I talked with him at the garden gate, 'Theodosia is dead! If she were not all the prisons in the world could not keep her from me!' Well, then, all of you must remember the loss of Theodosia Burr Alston?"

"I was in New Orleans at the time," said Leonard. "I heard nothing there, or if so, have forgotten."

"I also was in New Orleans," said Achille. "I do not remember—no, not at all."

"I do remember," said Sappha. "Mother was very sorry for Mr. Burr. We often spoke of him."

"You never told me about it, grandmother," added Annette. "Why did you not?"

"Good reasons had I. So much was there to say that could not be talked about. A great many people had yet in mind Catherine Ring's words, and so Aaron Burr's long watch for the child that never came was quietly and pitifully passed over. Yes, people remember; and if they do not remember they *feel*—they *feel,* they know not what. I have watched. One by one, I have seen those that welcomed Aaron Burr home drop away from him. This day a man stops and greets him, to-morrow he passes him by. The unlucky, they only stick to him; because for a familiar they know him. Aaron Burr is a doomed man—haunted by the wraiths of those he has wronged—a doomed man, and nothing that he does shall ever prosper."

She ceased speaking with these words, and after some desultory conversation on the subject, Sappha said, " she must go home." Then Annette went upstairs with her, and Achille made an effort to continue the subject; but neither madame nor yet Leonard were disposed for discussion; and when Sappha returned to the parlour, cloaked and wrapped in furs, Leonard hastily assumed his street costume and went out with her. Then the conversation, the warmth, and the drowsy light, added to the unusual feeling which the Ring tragedy had evoked, produced an effect upon madame she did not anticipate—she gradually lost consciousness, and finally fell asleep. For a while Achille and Annette spoke in whispers, and Annette tried all her powers to win from her companion the secret madame made so much of. He dallied with it, but kept it inviolate; and she dropped her pretty head with a sense of defeat that the circumstance hardly seemed to warrant. Quiet and speechless she sat, and Achille held her hand and watched the shadow of disappointment obliterate the dimples and smiles, not always as becoming in his eyes as her graver deportment. The glow of the fire-light, the stillness thrilled through and through with that old tragedy of love, the look of defeat in Annette's pretty face, and her whole attitude of submission to it, pleased the young man. He thought her more womanly and exquisite than ever before; and he kissed the hand he held, and said in the softest, sweetest voice: "I cannot tell you madame's secret, but I will tell you one of my own—Annette, beautiful Annette, I love you."

And Annette behaved with the most amazing propriety. He felt the little hand he held tremble to his words, and he saw on her face the transfiguration of love, though she did not lift it, or answer him in any other way. But this coy reticence was exactly the conduct Achille approved; and in that dim room, where only sleep kept vigil, Achille asked Annette to be his wife, and Annette answered him as he desired.

"I shall speak to madame in the morning," he said; "to-night it will be too much."

"It is too much even for me," answered Annette; "I never dreamed of being so happy."

"Nor I," answered the fortunate lover. He then surrendered himself to her charm. He forgot how often he had privately declared he would never do so; forgot how often he had told himself that Annette de Vries was a beauty with a heart like a little glacier. As for Annette, she was satisfied. In the first days of her acquaintance with Achille St. Ange she had resolved to be his wife; and her resolve was now in process of accomplishment. And after all, it had not been a difficult end to attain; a little love, a little listening, a little patience, a little persistence, and the man was won. It was only another case of proving the folly of any resistance to invincible woman. For has not all experience proved that if a woman seriously determines to marry a certain man she is about as sure to accomplish her end as if, wishing to reach Washington, she entered a train bound for that city?

During this scene between Annette and Achille Sappha and Leonard Murray were walking in the clear, frosty starlight. They were lovers, but their conversation was too anxious to be loverlike. Sappha was entreating Leonard to cancel his engagement with Mr. Burr. She was sure if he did not her father would permit no engagement with his daughter. "You will have to choose," she said, "between Mr. Burr and myself. You cannot take both into your life, Leonard; I am sure it is impossible." She did not name the Ring tragedy. She was far less impressed by it than Leonard had been. It was her father's opposition she feared.

Not so Leonard. He had inherited from his Scotch ancestors a vivid vein of supernatural tendency. His own clan had numerous traditions of posthumous revenge, so vindictive that Leonard's first unconscious commentary on madame's narrative was the whispered exclamation—only heard by Achille—" The vengeance of the dead is terrible!" But if there was this latent fear in his heart, mingled with the personal one that association might include him in that vengeance, the feeling was strongly combated by another inherited tendency, so vital as to be almost beyond reasoning with—the sentiment of loyalty to a person or a cause to which he had once given his allegiance. It had been a kind of insanity in his clan, for they had always gathered to the last man in the cause of their exiled kings, though they knew right well that to stand by the Stuarts was to stand by misfortune and death.

So, tossed between these two horns of a dilemma, Leonard could not make Sappha the unconditional promise she asked. He had given to Aaron Burr a fealty founded on an intense admiration for his great abilities and his great wrongs. The physical charm of the man had also fascinated Leonard, as it fascinated almost every one who came fairly under its influence; and thus, though warned by one ancestral strain to retire from some malignity he could not control, he was urged forward by another sentiment which put his word, his honour, his friendship, and his loyalty before all other considerations.

These underlying motives of action were but partially understood by Leonard, and were not comprehended in any measure by Sappha. But at eighteen years of age we do not need to know, in order to feel; we can feel without knowledge; and Sappha was certain that the association of her lover with a man so unfortunate as Mr. Burr would include both of them in its inimical proneness to calamity.

The mingling of these elements in Leonard's nature must be recognised before we can understand how a lover, earnest and devoted, could hesitate about casting adrift a friendship so recent when it threatened a tie still fonder and more personal. But the most invulnerable sentiments a man has to conquer are those he brings with him from previous incarnations. Prejudices and opinions planted in his mind during last year, or the present year, will have a demonstrative vitality; but there is a stubborn quality about those we bring with us that is only gained by passing through the grave and tasting of immortality. If Sappha's and Leonard's love for each other was not of the past, then it was hardly one year old; yet she was demanding for it a sacrifice of feelings incorporate in Leonard's nature from unknown centuries.

They walked together talking only of Mr. Burr for more than an hour; then Sappha said "she was cold and must go into the house." She was not so much cold as weary. We are always weary when we do not understand, and Sappha could not understand why Mr. Burr should interfere in her affairs. At the door Leonard spoke to her about the theatre on Friday night, and she promised to give her father and mother his invitation. "It is too late to detain you longer, my beloved," he said; "but I will call early in the morning for the answer. I hope they will accept my offer. It will make me very proud and happy."

Sappha was sure that her mother would do so. "My father is always uncertain," she said, "but I think he will go if I ask him."

In the morning, however, there was no question of naming the subject. The judge had come home late the previous night, and even then was suffering all the premonitory symptoms of an attack of gout. Sappha was accustomed to these evil periods, and quite aware that all Leonard's plans were useless. For no one but Mrs. Bloommaert and the two negro men who nursed the judge were likely to see him; or, if they were wise, to want to see him; and Sappha was compelled to add disappointment to the already restless dissatisfaction which had somehow invaded the love which Leonard really bore her.

The morning interview was, moreover, very hurried. Leonard was going to court to hear Mr. Burr argue a certain case, and though he did not tell Sappha this, she felt that Mr. Burr was the cause of her lover's unusual haste. Before he knew this objectionable person he had never worried about time; now he was constantly consulting his watch. She felt as if their love had been mingled with some element that robbed it of its immortal beauty and bound it to the slavery of hours and minutes; nay, she could not have defined her sense of loss, even thus far, accurately; she was only wistfully conscious of a change that was not a gain.

Leonard came early in the morning, and was bitterly disappointed to find that his little plan was absolutely abortive. The judge was suffering much, and the subject had not even been named to him. Mrs. Bloommaert, indeed, rather fretfully interrupted Sappha in the midst of her delivery of Leonard's invitation. "The theatre!" she ejaculated. "If you were in your father's room for ten minutes you would not have the courage to name the place. I am sorry, of course, but theatre-going is out of the question. Leonard does seem so unfortunate!"

"Do not be unjust, mother; don't you think it is father that is unfortunate? And then his misfortune makes you suffer, and I also; for I did want to go to the theatre on Friday night so much. I suppose Annette will be disappointed also, for of course she cannot go with Achille alone. They were, no doubt, calculating on your presence."

"It cannot be helped, Sappha. Your father must not be left; my place is with him. I suppose Mrs. Clark will be going. Leonard and you can join her party."

But when this proposition was made to Leonard he refused it without reservation. He was certain that the Clark party was already complete, and he showed a touch of stubbornness in temper that pained and astonished Sappha. If he could not have his pleasure exactly as he wished it, there was no longer any pleasure in it; and he said with an air of intense chagrin:

"I shall be the only young man of my circle who will not be there with the girl he loves and the family into which he hopes to be admitted. I feel it very much." And with these words he went away.

All morning Sappha sat in a kind of listless grief. She was in a mesh of circumstances against whose evil influence she was powerless. Nothing could avail. The morning was damp and cold and full of melancholy, the house strangely still; she could not sew, she could not read, she could only suffer. And at eighteen years of age suffering is so acute, it seems to youth's dreams of happiness such a wrong; and the reasonable indifference of age has, to its impatience, the very spirit of cruelty.

About noon Mrs. Bloommaert came into the room. She had a letter in her hand, and there was a singular expression of discomposure both on her countenance and in the fretful way in which she held the missive in her outstretched hand.

" Sappha," she said, " here comes news indeed! Your grandmother has written to tell us that last night Achille St. Ange asked Annette to marry him. And of course Annette accepted the offer," commented Annette's aunt. " Your grandmother seems delighted with the match."

" They will suit each other very well, mother. I am sure they will be happy. I must go and congratulate Annette."

" Not to-day. They both went, early this morning, with the news, to grandfather De Vries, and of course `that is a day's visit."

"As he is the guardian of her estate, Annette would have to ask him for money; for she will now want a great deal of it. I am glad she is going to marry Achille; she has loved him ever since they met."

"Annette loves Annette first and best of all. But she has plenty of sense, and she knows that a girl of twenty-one has no chances to throw away."

"Annette looks about seventeen, mother, and she has more lovers than I ever had."

"That is because you allowed every one to see your preference for Leonard Murray. Besides, what you say is not so. In spite of your partiality, no girl in New York has more admirers than Sapphira Bloommaert."

"I prefer Leonard to all I ever had, or might have had."

"Yes. I know. Very foolish, too! Your father does not like him; he will never give a willing consent to your marriage with him—and girls ought to marry before they are Annette's age. In fact, I have thought her a little old-maidish for a year past."

"Oh, mother! Now you are joking——"

"Too affected—too full of pouts, and shrugs and pirouettes; things very pretty when a girl is fifteen or sixteen, but quite old-maidish airs at twenty-one."

"Mother, Annette never looked more than seventeen, and she is not quite twenty-one."

"I think she looks every day of her age. She is more than two years older than you; and two years, when a girl is in her teens, is a great deal. Well, well, I thought you would have been married first."

"If father and you were willing, I could be married at once. Leonard would be glad; but——"

"Oh, yes! we all know how soon 'but' comes; *but,* you want your own way; *but,* father wants his way; *but*——"

"Mother wants her way also."

"No, no! Mother is willing for any way that works for others' happiness—and Leonard is well enough, only things seem always to go contrary for him and you."

"Dear mother, somebody once said the course of true love never did run smooth. Leonard loves me truly—for myself only. He is rich, and I am not rich. He could marry any girl he desires in New York, but he loves me. Is not that worth counting in his favour?"

"I never said different, Sappha."

"Annette is very rich; Leonard could have married Annette."

"I have no doubt of it. I should not wonder if Mr. St. Ange knows the exact amount of her fortune. Frenchmen are not indifferent to a fortune in their brides. I know that. It is a national custom to consider it. St. Ange will have a difficult interview with old De Vries! I would like very much to be present. De Vries will fight every dollar diverted from Annette's control. Oh, yes! he will fight them, cent by cent."

"Mother, dear, I do not think Achille has given Annette's money a moment's consideration. I do believe he loves her sincerely. He did not wish to love her. He fought the feeling for a long time; both Annette and I knew it, and Annette has often laughed at the way he held out. But she always said, when we spoke of the subject, 'He is not invincible, some day he will surrender.' I want to tell her how glad I am."

"You cannot do so to-day. It is evident they intended a long visit, for your grandmother says in a postscript, 'Tell Sappha to come very early in the morning. I want particularly to see her.'"

Here the conversation was interrupted by a violent ringing of the judge's bedroom bell; and the echo of a demanding voice whose tenor could not be mistaken. Mrs. Bloommaert threw her mother-in-law's letter toward Sappha, and answered the summons at once; and Sappha lifted the letter and carefully re-read it.

MY DEAR GERARDUS AND CARLITA:

I have to announce to you the engagement of Annette to my friend Achille St. Ange. I am pleased with Annette's choice, and her marriage will probably take place on her next birthday, the seventh day of June, on which day, as you know, she comes of age. I wish no objections to be made. Annette has pleased herself, and done well to herself, and what more can be expected?

Your affectionate mother,

JONACA BLOOMMAERT.

P. S.—Tell Sappha I wish to see her very early in the morning. I have a pleasant piece of news for her.

All through that dreary day this letter lay in Sappha's work-basket. It seemed almost to have life, and to talk to her; and when her mother came to drink a cup of tea, she was glad to give her back the intimate, insinuating bit of script. Mrs. Bloommaert held it a moment, and then locked it in the judge's desk. "I don't want to see it again," she said, "but if I burn it, your father will be sure to consider it important enough to keep. Can you imagine what news your grandmother has to tell you?"

"No. There was considerable jesting about a secret yesterday, but it did not strike me as important. It most likely relates in some way to Annette's marriage."

"That is hardly possible; Annette did not say a word of her engagement to you yesterday?"

"Oh, but grandmother would not permit her to speak until she herself had announced it. Grandmother is particular about such things. Still, I do not think they were engaged when I left there last night. Achille did not look, or act, like an engaged man; and Annette would have told the secret in twenty ways without uttering a word. I should certainly have seen it. No, the offer was made after I left. Achille was in a very sensitive mood. However, Annette will tell me everything to-morrow."

In the morning she obeyed her grandmother's request, and went to Nassau Street very early. She told herself as she walked rapidly through the frosty air that there would likely be some little change in Annette. "There always is," she mused; "as soon as a girl is engaged something takes place

—I wonder what it is." The first symptom of this change met Sappha at once. Annette did not run to meet her as usual, and though quite as demonstrative, there was a little air of superiority, of settlement, of some subtile accession, that was indefinable, and yet both positive and practical. She was dressed with great care, and in high spirits; and madame shared obviously in all her anticipations.

Sappha was indeed astonished at her grandmother's appearance and excited mood. Annette answered Sappha's congratulations with a kiss and a smile only; but madame expressed her pleasure frankly. She was already planning Annette's wedding and Annette's home. Suddenly she recollected herself, and said, "Well, then, have you remembered the secret I promised to tell you this morning, Sappha?"

"Is not Annette's good fortune the secret, grandmother?"

"No. Listen to me. I am going to the theatre to-night! You do not believe me? I assure you it is true. And you, and Annette, and Achille go with me. Achille has been making all preparations for my comfort; and I am sure to have a very happy evening. But it would not be happy, unless you and Annette shared it. Now you must return home, and send here the dress you are going to wear; and then you will spend the day with me. It is to be my gala day. I shall wear my velvet gown, and I am as happy as a little girl. A great evening it will be, and I intend to share all its gladness, and all its enthusiasms. And as Annette has been so kind and clever as to add her happiness to mine, it is a spring-tide of good luck. I consider myself a very fortunate woman."

"Dear grandmother, my father is suffering very much. Will it be kind and right for me to be at the theatre while he is in such distress?"

"Your father will drink Portugal wine, and then of course he suffers, and makes your mother and every one else miserable. He has the gout; well, you know what that means. I am sorry that he drinks wine, when he ought to drink water; but what he invites he must entertain. I am sorry also, that your mother cannot go with us; she has not drunk Portugal wine, and yet she has the deprivation. Yes, for your mother I am sorry. But as for stopping from the theatre to think about pre-arranged suffering, I shall not do it—and there is no obligation on you to deprive yourself of this night's pleasure. If I can go with a good conscience, you may safely go with me."

She had talked herself into a tone of self-defence, and Sappha perceived that it would be unwise to say more. Also, she was very eager for the promised entertainment, and wonderfully delighted at the idea of her grandmother's pleasant vagary.

"Why, grandmother!" she answered, "it will be part of the performance to see Madame Jonaca Bloommaert present. You will make quite a sensation, and when I am an old woman I shall talk about the night I went with grandmother to the Park Theatre."

Then she drew the lovely girl to her side and kissed her, and after a little discussion about the dress to be worn, urged her to go home and procure it. Also, she sent by Sappha certain messages to her son Gerardus, which Mrs. Bloommaert, upon consideration, positively refused to deliver.

"Your father is paying dearly for drinking a glass or two of wine," she answered, "and it is none of God's way to worry, as well as punish. And I will not tell him over again what he has been told so often; there is nothing so aggravating. What are you going to wear?"

"Mother dear, ought I to go? There is father—and there is Leonard——"

"I forgot! Leonard called here, while you were away."

"Oh, dear! What did you say to him, mother?"

"I could not see him. I was just giving your father his breakfast. He slept late this morning, and——"

"Then what message did you send?"

"I sent him word you were out, and told him it was impossible to accept his kind offer. Of course I made the refusal in as agreeable words as possible."

"Did you tell him I had gone to Nassau Street?"

"I forget—I suppose I did. It was Kouba who opened the door. Kouba would be sure to tell him."

Then Sappha went to her room, packed the clothing she desired, and sent it to Nassau Street by Kouba. On being questioned, he could not remember whether he had told Mr. Murray to go to Nassau Street or not—thought maybe he had. "Master Murray mighty dissatisfied like," he added, and then he looked curiously in Sappha's face.

"You are to take this parcel to Nassau Street, Kouba; and when you come back here you will find a letter for Mr. Murray on the piano; you will then go and find Mr. Murray, and give him the letter."

The writing of this letter was a difficult task to Sappha. She felt the cruelty of Leonard's position very much—his offer to her family had been early and most generous; yet it was impossible for her father and mother to accept it, and equally impossible for her to accept it alone. The disappointment to his own plans Leonard would doubtless take as cheerfully as possible; but what would he say to her going with Achille? For he might not see Madame Bloommaert's claim on her granddaughter in the light of an affectionate command and compliance; and then he would be jealous again—and then—and then? Sappha felt bewildered, until she recollected Annette's engagement. That circumstance would certainly define Achille's position and prevent any ill-will. "And I told him in my letter about it, so then it is all right." Thus she reasoned herself into a satisfied mood; and when she returned to her grandmother's and cousin's company she could not help catching the joyous expectancy of the situation.

And very soon Achille came in, and it was prettily amusing to watch the behaviour of the newly betrothed. It seemed as if they now found all the world a delightful mystery, a secret between themselves only. Such reliance, such hope, such expectation, had suddenly sprung up between them that there was a constant necessity for little confidences and unshared understandings. However, nothing could be more beautiful than the manner in which Achille treated madame. He consulted her about all the evening's arrangements, and gave her an affection and respect, which she returned with that charming kindness that is the innocent coquetry of old age.

It was finally agreed that Achille should come for them soon after five o'clock. The usual hour for opening the theatre was six, but Achille said the crowd on the streets was already very embarrassing and difficult to manage.

All afternoon there was a growing sense of something unusual and paramountly exciting—that undistinguishable murmur born of human struggle and exulting gladness. The three women dressed to it, and were all ready for their refreshing cup of tea at half-past four o'clock. Both girls had tacitly agreed that madame was to be the heroine of the occasion. Both assisted in her toilet, and escorted her downstairs like maids of honour. And certainly it would have been hard to find a woman of more distinguished appearance. Her gown of black velvet, though not in the mode, was in *her* mode, and suited her to perfection. White satin and fine lace made the stomacher, and her white hair was shaded by lace and by a little velvet hood turned back with white satin. Her face had a pretty pink flush, and she was very quiet during the last half hour of waiting.

"There were no theatres when I was a girl," she said softly. "Would you believe, my dears, that I have never been in a theatre, never seen a play? I wonder me, what your grandfather Bloommaert would say?"

"He would be glad to have you go, of course," answered Sappha. "Why, grandmother, you ought to go to-night. It is not the play you are going to see, it is something grander."

She smiled, and Annette said, "I hear a carriage coming. Grandmother, how do I look?"

"You are both pretty enough. It is a great satisfaction to see you dressed alike."

Then Achille entered, and hurried them a little. He said the immense crowd would render their progress very slow; but no one cared much for the delay. The crowd was orderly and full of enthusiasm. Scudder's Museum, all public places, and private houses were brilliantly illuminated; there was a sound of music everywhere, and the crowd itself continually burst into irrepressible patriotic song.

It was nearly six when they succeeded in reaching the theatre, and madame's heart thrilled very much as a child's would have done when she entered what seemed to her a fairy palace. For the whole front of the theatre was a brilliant transparency representing the engagement of the frigates *United States* and *Macedonian*. The Star Spangled Banner met their eyes on all sides, and to its inspiring music they entered the box Achille had provided. Most of the boxes were already filled to their utmost capacity; and in the gallery there was not space enough left for the foot of a little child. But the pit was empty, and to it every eye was turned. Almost immediately the tumultuously joyful cheering outside announced some important arrival. The orchestra struck up, with amazing dash and spirit, *Yankee Doodle,* and three hearty cheers answered the music as four hundred sailors from the war frigates entered. The crowd inside rose to greet them; cheer followed cheer, until women and men both sobbed with emotion. Then the gunner with his speaking trumpet took his stand in the centre of the pit, in order to command silence if necessary, and the boatswain with his silver call stood next him, to second his commands. And four hundred sailors in their blue jackets, scarlet vests, and glazed hats, all alive with patriotism and excited with victory, made a remarkable audience. They had just come from a dinner given them by the city at the City Hotel, and were exceedingly jovial, and perhaps the big gunner and the boatswain standing up in their midst were not amiss as guides and masters of ceremonies, for when Decatur shortly afterwards entered the box provided for him they rose at the sight of their commodore as one man, and gave twelve such cheers as only four hundred proud and happy sailors could give; every man standing on tiptoe and flourishing his glazed hat in that saucy, dauntless way that is peculiar to sailors. And whoever heard those repeated huzzas, with the silver whistle of the boatswain shrilling through them, heard music of humanity that they never in life forgot. Madame wept silently and unconsciously, Sappha sat with gleaming eyes still and white with emotion, Annette clapped her hands and leaned on Achille for support. The very atmosphere of the house was tremulous and electric, and men and women said and did things of which they were quite unconscious. And wild as the excitement was, it continued during the whole performance; the play, the scenes, the transparencies and dances being chosen and arranged for the purpose of calling out the naval spirit of the audience and of doing homage to the American sailor, who was deservedly at that hour the hope of the country and the idol of the people.

When the wonderful evening was over the sailors left the theatre in perfect order, and preceded by their own band of music marched to their landing at New Slip; and while this exit was transpiring, so many people visited Madame Bloommaert that she may be said to have held a ten minutes' royal reception in her box. And though the beautiful old woman with her beaming face and rich dark drapery was in herself a picture worth looking at, her charm was greatly increased by the lovely girls who stood on either side of her—both of them dressed alike in pale blue camblet gowns and spencers of the then rare chinchilla fur, so soft, so delicately grey, so inconstestably becoming.

"I have had four hours of perfect happiness," said madame, as she lay at last among her pillows, with her hands clasped upon her breast, "of perfect happiness! Think of that, children! Four hours of perfect happiness!"

Annette said eagerly, "I too, grandmother, I too have been perfectly happy." But Sappha did not speak, she bent her head and kissed madame, and fussed a little about her night posset, and her pillows, and the rush light, and so managed to evade any notice of a silence which might have been construed adversely. For indeed Sappha had not been perfectly happy. She had rejoiced with those that rejoiced, but in her heart there was a sense of failure. Leonard had not sought her out, and she had been unable to gain any recognition from him. For a short time he was in the Clarks' box, and she watched for some sign that he was aware of her presence; but the sign did not come, and long before the entertainment was over he had disappeared.

"He is jealous again," she thought with a sigh. And really it appeared as if, in this crisis, he had some cause for offence. His offer to accompany Sappha and her family had been refused, and Sappha was with Achille. He had not even been asked to join Achille's party, and as for the judge's gout—every one knew he was subject to the complaint. He thought Mrs. Bloommaert might have left him for three or four hours; he told himself that she would have done so if Sappha had asked her with sufficient persuasion. It angered him to see the girl he loved and whose troth he held, in the company of Achille St. Ange. For he was not yet aware of Achille's engagement to Annette, the letter which Sappha sent by Kouba not having reached him. For Kouba had thought far more of enjoying the excitement of the streets than of finding Mr. Murray, and the only effort he made in that direction was to finally leave the letter at the City Hotel, where he was told Mr. Murray was dining.

So this tremulous fear of having wounded her lover was dropped into Sappha's cup of pleasure, and clouded and dimmed its perfection. Its very uncertainty was fretsome; there was nothing tangible to put aside; it affected her as a drop of ink infects a glass of pure water—it cannot be definitely pointed out, but it has spoiled the water. The only certain feeling was a regret, which lay like a slant shadow over her heart and life. She was glad when the morning came. She wished to go home, and be alone a little. Annette's selfish joy, though effusively good-tempered, was not pleasant, and it struck Sappha in that hour that there are times when good breeding is better than good temper.

On arriving at the Bowling Green she interviewed Kouba at once. But Kouba had his tale ready. He assured Sappha that he had found Mr. Murray eating his dinner at the City Hotel, and that a white man had promised to send the letter right away to him, "And I saw him do it," he added, with a reckless disregard for facts. If this was the case, then Leonard knew of the engagement between Annette and Achille, and she could not imagine why her lover had so obviously ignored her.

But for a time it was necessary to put this question out of her mind. She had to describe the previous evening's proceedings to her father and mother, and then it was dinner time—and Leonard had not come. She was utterly miserable, and under the plea of a headache went to her room. It was impossible for her to talk any longer of those things that did not concern her. She wanted to think of her lover, and if possible discover what course was the best to take.

"Oh, if father had not been ill just at this time!" she sighed, "we might have been all so happy together last night! Why did father's attack come on the very day both mother and I wanted him to be well? Oh, how unfortunate!" And Sappha's lament was quite true—the unfortunate thing usually happens at the unfortunate time, for a malign fate never does things by half. So the girl wept, and told herself that she was sorry she had gone to the theatre at all, and that whenever she tried to be kind to others and to forget herself she was always sorry. She declared Leonard had a right to be offended. He had been badly treated, and his desire to have their engagement made public was a wise and honourable one for both of them. Perhaps her arguments were all wrong, but then the human relations are built on feeling, not on reason or knowledge. And feeling is not an exact science; like all spiritual qualities, it has the vagueness of greatness about it.

However, youth is happy in this respect—it can weep. Sorrow finds an outlet by the eyes; when we grow older it sinks inward and drowns the heart. So Sappha wept her grief away, and was sitting in a kind of dismal, hopeless stillness when Leonard came.

They met and embraced speechlessly, and it was evident that Leonard also had been suffering. But in little confidences and mutual explanations all suspicions and fears passed away, and their love was nourished and cherished by the tears with which they watered it. And in this interview they came to the conclusion that their engagement must be publicly ratified, and Leonard promised to see Judge Bloommaert as soon as the latter was able to discuss the subject.

"And you will not vex my father about Mr. Burr? Dear Leonard, you will not put Mr. Burr before me?"

"I will put no one on earth before you, my darling! No one!"

"Remember, Leonard, that you have had nothing but worries since you visited the man. But wherever or whenever you meet Aaron Burr, I would count it an unlucky day."

And the questionable words sunk deeper into Leonard's consciousness than far more reasonable arguments would have done. He answered them with kisses only, but as he walked up the Bowling Green he said at intervals, as if answering his thoughts: "Perhaps—maybe—who can tell? She is best of all, God forever bless her!"

As for Sappha, she went swiftly upstairs to her room. Her heart was as light as it had been heavy. She sat down, she arose, she rubbed her palms with pleasure, she sighed, she smiled, and her eyes were full of love's own light as she whispered softly, "Leonard! Leonard! Leonard! Oh, my dear one!"

Thus does grief favour all who bear the gift of tears.

CHAPTER
SEVEN

The Incident of Marriage

THE interview so important to Leonard's love affairs, and so eagerly desired by him, did not come as he had planned it should come. He had intended to speak to the judge when Mrs. Bloommaert was present and Sappha not far away, for he counted very largely on their personal influence for a favourable answer to his request. But one morning as he was passing the house the judge, who was sitting by the window, saw him; and by a friendly, familiar gesture, invited him to an interview.

"You see, Mr. Murray," he said cheerfully, "I have fallen behind in all city news. Sit an hour and tell me what is going on." And he held the young man's hand and looked with pleasure into his frank, handsome countenance.

"Well, judge, De Witt Clinton is sure to be re-elected mayor."

"Yes, yes; the majority of the council are Federalists."

"I think the war party are equally in his favour."

"No doubt, he has been a good mayor. Any war news?"

"There is a report that the *Constitution* captured the British war frigate *Java* about last Christmas Day. I believe the report, for it came by the privateer *Tartar,* Captain King."

"I wish we could have any such news from the Niagara frontier. Nothing but disaster comes that way. The government has requested my son Peter to go there and assist Brown with the building of the lake fleet. I wonder if it will accomplish anything."

"All it is intended to accomplish, judge. We must give the men up there time and opportunity. Before summer is over we shall hear from them."

They then began a conversation upon the defences of New York, and Leonard described the work going forward on Hendrick's reef, and at Navesink. "There are more than eight hundred Jersey Blues on the heights," he said, "and the telegraph on the Highlands is ready to work. General Izard is an active and zealous officer."

Having exhausted this subject, the judge suddenly became personal, and with an abruptness that startled Leonard, asked:

"How are you spending these fine winter days, Mr. Murray? Tell me, if my question is not an intrusive one."

"Indeed, sir, I consider it a great honour. And advice from you, at this time, would be of more service than you can imagine."

"If you will take it; but most people ask advice only that it may confirm them in the thing they have already resolved to do."

"I will ask your advice, sir. It cannot but be better than my own opinion." Then Leonard explained his intention with regard to the study of the law regulating real estate, and Judge Bloommaert listened with attention and evident satisfaction.

"It will be a good thing for you to do, Mr. Murray," he answered, when Leonard ceased speaking. "You ought not to be idle, even if you can afford it; and this study will not only employ your time, it will eventually save you much money. Go and see Mr. Vanderlyn. Perhaps he may let you read with him. No one knows more about real estate."

"I have been told, sir, that Mr. Burr is the greatest authority on that subject."

"Mr. Burr is out of consideration."

"I confess, sir, that I have already considered him."

"Have you spoken to him?"

"Not definitely."

"Mr. Murray, if you sit in Mr. Burr's office, you will soon share his opinions. And in such case, I should be compelled to forbid you the society of myself and family. You cannot touch pitch and not be defiled."

He spoke with rising anger, and Leonard answered as softly as possible:

"Judge, I ask your advice in this matter. I have already told you I would take it. Can we not talk of Mr. Burr as reasonably as of the war and our defences? I am open to conviction, and free to confess that I do not see what Mr. Burr has done to merit the ostracism he is receiving from certain parties. I suppose it is one of the accidents of his fate, a paradox—and life is full of paradoxes."

"Mr. Burr's ostracism is no accident; it is his own act. The man has committed a crime, and the interpretation thereof is written on everything he does."

"You mean his duel with Mr. Hamilton? Sir, if Mr. Hamilton had killed Mr. Burr, would the Federalists have considered it a crime?"

"Mr. Hamilton's case is out of our jurisdiction. It is gone to a higher court."

"Is not that special pleading, judge?"

"It will do for the case."

"Hamilton had publicly called Burr unprincipled, dangerous, despicable, an American Cataline—oh, many other derogatory epithets! Would not Mr. Burr have been generally held as despicable if he had not defended his good name?"

"By killing his defamer?"

"Well, sir, how else could he have done it?"

"In politics men call each other all sorts of ill names. They even invent new ones for their opponent. And though in Paradise the lion will lie down with the lamb, in Paradise they will not have to submit their rival political views to general elections. Say that Mr. Hamilton was vituperative—it was a war of words. Mr. Burr had a tongue and a pen, as well as Mr. Hamilton. If Mr. Hamilton had insulted Mr. Burr's wife, or run off with his daughter, there might have been some excuse for a bloody settlement, but words, words, words, the tongue or the pen would have answered them."

"Then, judge, you do not approve of the duel?"

"I do not. But I think that Mr. Burr's fatal mistake will eventually put duelling as much out as witchcraft. We shall probably also have strong repressive laws against it."

"Yet as long as public opinion respects duelling, no repressive law will be as strong as public opinion. We are as moral and intelligent now as any people can be, yet the duel is not obsolete, nor has Mr. Burr's ostracism been a deterrent."

"I know that. Last year two men quarrelled about an umbrella in the hall of Scudder's Museum, and the next day one of them shot the other dead. Nine out of ten people called the dead man a fool for his pains. Mr. Murray, the duel has become perilously close to the ridiculous. Men may talk about blowing out brains for an angry word, but the majority quietly laugh at the absurdity. Such conduct is totally unworthy of American common sense. For no man of intelligence would fight a duel if he remembered that he would render himself liable to form the text for an article in *The Morning Chronicle*. To be treated either with its satire or its morality would be equally depressing—it would make him intensely ridiculous in any case. But we shall never give up duelling on moral and intelligent grounds."

"Then on what other grounds?"

"The class duellists come from are the brainless class; and if the custom was strictly confined by this class to their fellows, it would be one of the most innocent of their amusements. We must make duelling ridiculous, for when mockery and satire are constant about any subject, you may know that thing is dead, and its shell only remains."

"But, judge, if a man's honour is assailed——"

"If we were all Hotspurs, Mr. Murray, and ready to plunge into the deep and pluck honour by the locks, we might count on sympathy; but when the majority think with Falstaff, that 'honour is a mere scutcheon' we get a chill, until we remember the divine law. For after all, sir, the Decalogue remains as a finality. Look up the sixth clause of that code."

"There is nothing to add to it, sir."

"Not on moral and intellectual grounds. Socially, you may remember the homely proverb which advises 'Go with good men, and you will be counted one of them.' Go with Mr. Burr, and you will be counted with him; held at the same price—nay, you will be only one of Mr. Burr's satellites. If you want really to study law——"

"No, sir. I give up the idea. I have said sufficient to Mr. Burr to wound him if I go elsewhere. And just because he is down at present, I will not give him a coward's kick."

"There is no occasion to do so. It is not a chargeable thing to salute civilly. But Mr. Burr's affairs are none of your profit, therefore why make them your peril?"

"I thank you for your good advice, judge."

"Then take it."

"I will, sir."

"Now having interfered with your intention, I am bound to offer you something in its place. It is this: I can get you active employment with Gouverneur Morris, Simeon De Witt, and John Rutherford, who are busy yet in perfecting their plans for the streets of the future New York. I should not wonder if they map out the whole island. In fact, they have already provided space for a greater population than is collected on any spot this side of China. I cannot say I like their mathematical arrangement; they are making a city idealised after Euclid—straight, stiff, wearisome, without character or expression."

"But it will be a most convenient arrangement. I would carry the plan out, even north of Harlem Flat."

"There will be no houses there for centuries to come."

"Oh, yes, sir, before this century goes out."

The judge smiled. He liked the young man's enthusiasm, and he answered: "So be it. You shall help to survey the ground. I will speak to De Witt to-morrow."

At this point of the discussion there was a knock at the front door, followed by a little stir of entrance, and the sound of speech and light laughter. Both men were suddenly all ear. There was no more conversation, and after a few moments of silent expectation Mrs. Bloommaert and Sappha entered the room together. They were in happy mood, and Sappha was so lovely with the bloom of the frosty air on her smiling face that Leonard forgot everything and every one but her, and before either were aware he had taken her hands and kissed her.

The next moment they both realised their position, and Leonard, still holding Sappha's hand, led her to the astonished father. " Sir," he said, " we have loved each other since we were children. Will you now sanction our love, and permit our betrothal? "

The judge looked helplessly at his wife. She was watching the young couple with smiles on her face, and evident sympathy in her heart for their cause. If he wished to be adverse and disagreeable, he foresaw he would have no help from Mrs. Bloommaert. Yet to give up in a moment all the wavering feelings of dislike he had entertained for Leonard, and all his own settled purpose of no recognised engagement for his daughter until peace was accomplished, was a hard struggle. Perhaps it was well he had to decide in a moment. At that precise hour he was in a mood of liking Leonard, and he had no time to reason himself into another mood. Slowly, and with a little asperity, he answered:

" Mr. Murray, it seems to me you have not waited either for my sanction or my permission."

"Ah, sir, consider the temptation."

Involuntarily he looked into the face of "the temptation." With clear, shining eyes she held his eyes a moment, and then her voice uttered the undeniable entreaty: "I love Leonard so dearly, father. And he loves me."

"I see! I see!"

"We only wish to please you, father; that is best of all."

"Indeed, sir, that is best of all!" said Leonard eagerly.

"Well, well! In this country the majority rules. What can a man do if there are three against him, especially when one of the three is his wife?" and he shook his head, and looked somewhat reproachfully at his wife.

Then Sappha slipped her arms around his neck, and laid her cheek against his, and he embraced his daughter and stretched out his hand to Leonard.

Thus Fortune often brings in the boats we do not steer, and by what we call a happy accident guides our dearest and most difficult hopes to a sudden fruition. It is then a good thing to leave the door wide open for our unknown angels. They often accomplish for us what we hardly dare to attempt.

After this settlement Sappha and Leonard felt that they might revel in the joy of life and take their pleasure whereever they found it. And they found it both in public and private affairs. Annette's marriage was to take place in June, and there were preparations without end going on for that event. Her grandfather De Vries had given her, as a wedding gift, the Semple place, a beautiful old home set in a fine garden which had once sloped down to the river bank.

"It is not exactly what I should have chosen," said the bride-elect; "but it is valuable property, and grandfather would not have given it to me if I had not promised to live there."

"It is no hardship to live in the Semple house," said Sappha. "The rooms are so large, the woodwork so richly carved, and the garden is the sweetest, shadiest place in New York, I think."

"Grandmother is going to furnish it, and she lets me choose exactly what I want. I declare, dear Achille and I have no time for love-making, we are so worried about chairs and tables and wedding garments."

"I never should have thought Achille would worry about anything. He is always so deliberate, and so calm."

"Oh, but a man in love is a different creature, and I can tell you that Achille is distractingly in love. I am not quite ignorant about the queer ways of men in a fever of infatuation. Why, he scarcely ever goes to see the pastry cook now."

"Oh, but De Singeron was a gallant officer of King Louis! He is in exile and misfortune, that is all. The pastry business is but an emergency—and he manages it splendidly——"

"Certainly. I have always liked his good things. And he is going to make us the most wonderful wedding cake. However, when Achille and I are married Achille will have to give up many things, and Monsieur Auguste Louis de Singeron will be one of them. At present I have too many things to worry about to interfere."

"You have nearly half a year in which to do your worrying. Why not take things more easily?"

"Oh, the fun is in the fuss! Did you hear that General Moreau is going back to Europe to join the allies? The emperor of Russia has sent for him, and now he will have the chance to pay Napoleon back for his nine years' exile. But I shall never pass 119 Pearl Street without a sigh. No one ever gave such princely entertainments as the Moreaus. The general is to have a great appointment, but what he likes best is the chance of fighting the world's big tyrant. Achille is going to see him embark—and many others. But this is not my affair. There is my wedding gown, for instance."

"Have you decided on it?"

"It must be white—everything about me must be white. Achille says so. I think grandmother will send to Boston for the silk or satin; there is none here of a quality fit for the most important gown a woman can ever wear. You would think it was grandmother's wedding, she is so interested in every little thing about it."

Indeed, Annette did not much overstate madame's interest in her granddaughter's marriage preparations. She lifted the additional work, and even the additional expense, with a light-hearted alacrity that was wonderful. And in many ways her cheerfulness brought her a rich and ready reward. She had been almost a recluse for some years, she was now seen constantly on the streets and in the stores, and not infrequently in this way she became a delighted spectator of public parades and military drills and movements. Achille usually accompanied her, and his respectful attentions were a source of wonder and speculation to those who forgot to consider that Frenchmen are specially trained to give honour, and even reverence, to old age. So it was not remarkable that madame put on a kind of second youth; how could she be in constant, affectionate accord with four loving young hearts and not do so?

For the next half-year, then, Annette was the centre of interest in her own little world. The judge and Mrs. Bloommaert, Sappha, and Leonard gladly entered into the spirit of this generous service for, and sympathy with, the exultant little bride. And at this period of her life, even her foibles and selfishness were pleasantly excused. It was her last draught of the careless joy of girlhood; no one wished to spill, or spoil, one drop of it.

Leonard and Sappha were much of their time at the Bloommaert House in Nassau Street; although Leonard, in the City Commissioner's office, was making some pretence of mapping out streets and lots of ground in the wilderness round Harlem Flat. But this business hardly interfered with his attentions to Sappha and Annette; nor yet with the military spirit which took him very regularly to the guard-room of some of the volunteer companies. He was also a recognised dependence when the city wished to entertain some hero whom it delighted to honour; for then both his purse and his natural genius for method and arrangement made him an invaluable surety for success.

During this half-year there were not many warlike events to influence New York, and her citizens had become quite used to the guns at the different forts signalling "the British fleet off Sandy Hook." Many false alarms also contributed to this sense of security. They were well aware, too, that the already numerous forts were being steadily increased and strengthened, and in April the Battery parade was fortified. This park was then a strip of greensward about three hundred feet wide, between State Street and the water's edge. It had no sea wall, only a low wooden fence on the edge of a bluff two or three feet high; then loose sand and pebbles to the water's edge. There was a dock at the foot of Whitehall Street, and at Marketfield Street the water came nearly to the middle of the block between Washington and Greenwich streets. About the centre of the southeastern part of this park there was a public garden and a charming little hall, where coffee, cakes, ice cream, and other delicacies were served; and on summer evenings some of the military bands made excellent music there for the visitors.

Of course, the erection of a breastwork around this water line of the park was an interesting event to all the dwellers on the Bowling Green, and Sappha and Leonard, during the lovely days of April and May, took their walks about the Battery fortifications, and thus thrilled their love through and through with the passion of patriotism and the glow and excitement of its warlike preparations.

It was while these Battery defences were being constructed that the city gave one of its usual great entertainments to Captain Lawrence, who in the *Hornet* had captured the British brig-of-war *Peacock*. Two circumstances made this dinner one that brought the war very close to the people of New York—the first was the fact that Lawrence was a citizen of New York; the second was the marching of the one hundred and six survivors of the sunk ship *Peacock* through all the principal streets of the city to their prison in Fort Gansevoort, thus affording the populace a very visible proof of victory. It was, however, noticeable that few of American parentage offered any insult to the depressed-looking sailors, while many men of the first consideration raised their hats as the unhappy line passed. Leonard and Achille were among this number. "Honour to the vanquished!" said Achille with emotion; and Leonard, remembering who had taught them that sentiment, repeated it. And this courtesy was the more emphatic, because at that very time a large number of British war vessels had entered the Chesapeake and Delaware bays.

But did war ever stop marriage? On the contrary, it seems to give a strange vitality and hurry to love-making; and in the midst of all its alarms Annette's wedding preparations went blithely on to their determined crisis. On the seventh of June Annette, being of age, became mistress of her estate, and on the seventeenth of the same month she married Achille St. Ange.

It was an exquisite summer day, and the old house in Nassau Street had never looked more picturesquely homelike. Every rose tree was in gloom, and doors and windows were all open to admit the scented air. For the company far exceeded the capacity of the parlours; it filled the hall, the stairway, and the piazzas, and even in the garden happy young people were wandering among the syringa bushes and the red and white roses. And presently there was a little wistful, eager stir, and Annette, followed by her grandmother and Sappha, came softly down the stairway. Then the girls sitting there rose and stood on each side of the descent, and Achille hastened to meet the snow-white figure, and ere she touched the floor took her hands in his own. And never had Annette looked so fair and so lovely; from the rose in her hair to the satin sandals on her feet she was in lustrous white. The faint colour of her cheeks, the deeper red of her mouth, and the heavenly blue of her eyes were but the tender tints that gave life to the bright, slow-moving, bride-like beauty.

Many a time Annette had consciously assumed a pensive, thoughtful expression, for Achille admired her most in such moods; but there was no necessity for the pretence this day. Those who had any penetrative observation might see beyond the light of her sweet smiles and glances the shadowed eyes that both remember and foresee. She was not a girl at all inclined to reflection, but feeling and intuition go where reason cannot enter, and Annette felt that this very day was the meridian day of her life. Having gained this, the height of her hope and desire, she wondered—even against her will —"if she must henceforward tread the downward slope until the evening shades of life found her?" Was this day to give a future to her past and change girlhood's simple hopes into the richer joys of wifehood? Or would this new self that had just taken possession of her bring kisses wet with tears, waste remembrance of vanished hours, and forlorn sighs for the days eventual? Not these words, but the sentiment of them, insinuated itself into the bride's consciousness. It was uncalled, and unwelcome; and Annette, frowning at the intrusion, dismissed it. She had always found "change" meant something better, and that there was ever a living joy, ready to take the place of a dead one, even as—

"The last cowslip in the fields we see
On the same day with the first corn poppy."

Fortunately, after any great domestic vicissitude, there is generally a suspension of everything unusual. The family in which it has occurred refuse to be drawn into further changes. They instinctively feel that marriage, as well as death, makes life barren, and they say in many different ways, "It is enough. Leave things as they are; at least, for a little while."

This was certainly the feeling in the Bloommaert family, and it was made more sensible by the unsatisfactory condition of the country. The campaign on the northern frontier had been, all the year, one military disaster, and the president designated the ninth of September as " a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, and for an invocation for divine help." On the eighth of September the British men-of-war captured thirty coasters within twelve miles of New York city, and the citizens who knelt in the pews of Trinity the next day not only felt the need of divine help, but were also wonderfully strengthened and comforted by the appropriate selection designated in the Prayer Book for the ninth day of the month. These were so remarkably suitable and encouraging that several of the newspapers called attention to the circumstance.

The very day after this public entreaty for help Commodore Perry in his flagship *Lawrence* won his victory on Lake Erie, and on the twenty-second of the month the news reached New York City, and turned fear and sadness into hope and triumph. General Harrison's victory over Tecumseh followed, and these two successes had a special claim on the thankfulness of New York City and State; for " they gave security and repose to two hundred thousand families, who a week before then, could not fall asleep any night, with the certainty of escaping fire or the tomahawk until morning."

Never since the white man first trod Manhattan Island had food and clothing been so difficult to obtain; and yet the great mass of the people of New York City did not seem to be at all anxious about national affairs. They had become accustomed to the war, and domestic life went very well then, to its triumphs and excitements of many kinds. For, if the prices of all the necessities and conveniences of life were high, there were plenty of treasury notes to pay for them; and very frequently valuable cargoes were brought, or sent, into port as prizes of some of the American privateers that were then swarming on the ocean.

Harrison's victory and the approach of winter gave New York a feeling of present security, and the city was unusually gay. General Moreau's princely entertainments were hardly missed, for the St. Anges' dinners and balls were even more frequent, and more splendid; and Annette presided over these functions with a marvellous grace and tact. She seemed, at this time, to have realised her utmost ambition, and to be happy and satisfied in the actuality. Even the judge was more hospitable than he had ever before been; and madame was in a perpetual flutter between the dinners of her son Gerardus and the dances of her granddaughter, Annette.

So to the thrill of warlike drums and trumpets and the witching music of the dance fiddle Sappha's wooing went happily forward. There was constant movement between the Bowling Green, Nassau Street, and the Semple house; and it was just as well Leonard had not opened any law book, for in these days all his reading and research was in the light and love of Sappha's eyes. Certainly in the City Commissioner's office his work was trifling and inconstant, for the greater part of his time was spent in the civil services necessary for the comfort of the many militia companies then in the city. In this respect he held a kind of non-official oversight; for he was always ready to personally supply, at once, comforts which otherwise would have been delayed. Consequently he was welcome in every guard-room, and no young man in New York was more popular or more respected.

Judge Bloommaert was well aware of this fact, and yet there were times when the old dislike would assert itself; and, strange as it may seem, this feeling was usually caused by Leonard's overflowing vitality, his almost boisterous good humour, and his confident conversation.

" The fellow never knows when he has ceased to be interesting," he said one night fretfully, " and you and Sappha hang upon his words as if they were very wisdom. I am astonished at you, Carlita."

" And I at you, Gerardus. Why cannot you two talk an hour together without getting on each others' prejudices? "

" Leonard is always so cock-sure he is right."

" Convice him he is wrong."

" You cannot handle his arguments any more than you can handle soap bubbles; both are so empty."

" I think he is very interesting. He knows all that is going on, and he tells us all he knows."

"To be sure! He is a walking newspaper, and the leading article is always Leonard Murray. Whatever does Sapphira Bloommaert see in him? I am sure, also, that he keeps up his acquaintance with Mr. Burr. Yet he knows my opinion about that man."

"Well, you see, Gerardus, though you may interfere somewhat in Leonard Murray's love affairs, you cannot dictate to him concerning his friends. Suppose he should tell you that he did not approve of your friendship with Mr. Morris?"

"The impertinence is not supposable, Carlita. What are you thinking of? Such remarks are enough to make any man lose his temper."

"Very likely, but if you lose your present temper, Gerardus, do not look for it; it is not worth finding. Do you really wish to separate Sappha and Leonard, after all that has been said and granted?"

"I do not say that. Cannot a man grumble a little to his wife? And must she take every fretful word at its full value? People complain of bonds they would never break. As the Dutch proverb has it, 'The tooth often bites the tongue, but yet they keep together.'"

"Dear husband, all will come right in the long run. Leonard is in a very hard position. He desires to please so much that he exceeds, and so offends. He loves Sappha with all his heart; that should excuse many faults."

"I do not see it in that way. It is not a favour to love

Sapphira, nor yet a hard thing to do. What are you talking about?"

"I am saying that we both need sleep. We are tired out now. In the morning things will look so different."

Such little frets, however, hardly ruffled the full stream of the life of that day. There were plenty of real worries for those who wished to complain; and for those inclined to take the fervour and faith, the courage and self-denial of the time, there were plenty of occasions for happiness and hope. And so the winter grew to spring, and the spring waxed to summer, and June brought roses and the most astonishing news.

It came to the Bloommaert's one morning as they were sitting at the breakfast table. The meal was over, but they lingered together discussing a dinner party which Annette was to give that day, and their order of going to it. It was a special dinner, to which only relatives of the family were invited, and was given in honour of Annette's little daughter, then six weeks old. Madame was present, and took an eager interest in the affair, for the child had been called by her name; and she had with her the deed of a house in Cedar Street, which she was going to put into the little Jonaca's hand.

Leonard had promised to call for Sappha at twelve o'clock, but the judge was advising them to go early, when the parlour door was thrown open with some impetuosity, and Leonard stood looking at the group with a face full of conflicting emotions. In a moment every one had divined that he had important news, and the judge rose to his feet and asked impatiently:

"What is it, Leonard?"

"Two hundred thousand French troops are prisoners of war. Paris is in possession of the allies. Napoleon has been exiled. The Bourbons are again on the throne of France."

"My God! Is all this true, Leonard?"

"There is not a doubt of it."

"Then I must go and see Gouverneur Morris at once. Tell Annette I will be on time for dinner." And he hurried away with these words, and left Leonard to discuss the news and the dinner with the three excited women.

There was now no unnecessary delay, for the streets were already in a state of commotion, the news having spread like wildfire. Nor could they escape the influence of the fervid atmosphere through which they passed; the glowing sunshine was not more ardent than the passionate rejoicing and the passionate hatred that challenged each other at every step of their progress. Even the shadowy stillness of the Semple gardens and the large, cool rooms of the house were full of the same restless antagonising spirit. Annette's cousins, the Verplancks and the Van Burens, and her aunt, Joanna de Vries, speedily followed them, but it was only the women of the families that entered the house; the men hastened back to Broadway and the Battery to hear and to discuss the news. And it was hard for Annette to keep a smiling face over her angry heart. Who were the Bourbons that they should interfere with her affairs? Indeed, she complained to her grandmother bitterly of Achille's strange conduct. He had left her in the midst of their breakfast, left her as soon as he heard the news, without one thought as to the family duties devolving on him that day. And madame had not been too sympathetic. "You have been crying, Annette," she said. "I am afraid you have a discontented temper. For the dinner, your husband will return."

"I know not, grandmother. When that pastry cook flung open our parlour door and cried out *'Achille! Achille! Napoleon is in exile! The Bourbons are on the throne of France again!'* Achille flung himself into the man's arms, and they kissed each other. Grandmother, they kissed each other, and then went off together as if they were out of their senses."

"But to you also, Achille spoke? Of the dinner he spoke; I know it."

"He said he would return in time for dinner; but he will forget—he was beside himself——"

"Come, come, let not Joanna de Vries see that you are vexed at any thing. Too much she will have to say. Here comes Madame Rutgers! Shall we go to them?"

Then Annette went to welcome her guests, and, with longer or shorter delays, the company gathered. Every one had something strange to add to the general excitement, but it was only the women that chattered and quarrelled until near two o'clock. Then the judge and Leonard came in together, and were soon followed by the young Verplanks, Commissioner Van Buren and his two sons, and Cornelius Bogart, Annette's favourite cousin.

But Achille at two o'clock had not arrived, and the dinner was ready, and the company waiting—the men very impatiently, for at "high 'Change" they had taken their usual nooning of a piece of raw salt codfish and a glass of punch, and they knew that the ordinary at the Tontine Coffee House, in Wall Street, would have at three o'clock a dinner very much more to their mind, considering the news of the day and the disturbance and the agitation it had caused. Annette, under these conditions, had nothing to offer as attractive. The women, fair and otherwise, were the women of their own family connections; and relations must be taken as found; there is no choice, as in friends. Which of us has not relations that would never be on our list of friends?

So there was an uncomfortable hour of waiting, and as Achille came not Madame Bloommaert proposed to serve dinner without his presence. "For one laggard," she said, "to keep twenty-eight people waiting is not right, Annette. At once, now, the dinner ought to be served."

Annette agreed to this, but it was hard for her to smile, and to keep back tears. However, just as Judge Bloommaert was going to take Achille's place the laggard entered. And he was in such a radiant mood that he passed over as insignificant his delay. "He was a little late—he had forgotten—but then it was remarkable that he should have remembered at all. Such news! Such glorious news? Oh, it had been a wonderful morning!"

In further conversation he said his friend Monsieur de Singeron had presented his business to a poor French family. "He is going home! He is beside himself with joy!" he continued. "He will be restored to his rank, and to his command in the royal guards! Ah! it is enough to have lived to see this day. It atones, it atones for all!" And Achille, who could neither eat nor drink, sat smiling at every one. He was sure all reasonable people must feel as he did.

"I suppose," said Judge Bloommaert, "most of the French exiles will return, as soon as they can, to their native country."

"They will make no delays," answered Achille. "It was a good sight to watch them on the ship and the river bank. They were unhappy, uncertain, until they saw with their own eyes the frigate that had brought the glad news. and her captain understood. He permitted the crowd to tread her deck. He flew over them the lilies of France. He spoke to them in their own tongue. Ah, my friends, you will sympathise with these sad exiles; you will not wonder that they knelt down and wept tears of joy!"

Indeed, Achille was so transported with his own sympathies that he failed to perceive the atmosphere of dissent among his guests. True, the judge's fellow feeling was evident, also that of the Verplanks, but the De Vries family and the Van Burens were in hot opposition to anything, or any one, whom the Federalists favoured. So the element of the room was not conducive to domestic rejoicing; and the dinner was virtually a failure. The men of the party were all anxious to return to their clubs or gathering-places; and the women, left to themselves, soon exhausted their admiration for the little Jonaca, and remembered their own homes and household affairs. And as the day waned, the thick trees surrounding the Semple house filled the rooms with shadows, and Annette—a little dismayed by Achille's conduct—could not lift her flagging spirits to the proper pitch of hospitality. Then Joanna de Vries opened the way for an early retreat. She spoke of the restless streets, and of her father's great age and loneliness, and immediately every one recollected duties equally as important. And as madame intended to remain with Annette, Mrs. Bloommaert and Sappha also took their departure.

It was a beautiful summer evening, and the streets, though neither crowded nor boisterous, were full of life. The happy French residents had illuminated their houses, and through their open windows came joyful sounds of rejoicing and song. Federalist orators were addressing small gatherings of people at the street corners, and Democratic orators contradicting all they said at the next block. Applause, laughter, derision, enthusiasm of one kind or another thrilled the warm air, and the joy and pang of life assailed the heart or imagination at every step.

On the Bowling Green there was a very respectable audience listening to Gouverneur Morris, who was speaking in such passionate accord with Achille's sentiments that it was astonishing not to find Achille at his right hand.

"Mr. Morris is the most eloquent speaker of the age," said Leonard; "let us listen a few minutes to his words." And as they did so, they heard the embryo utterance of that remarkable "Bourbon speech" which he made a few days afterwards in Dr. Romeyn's church in Cedar Street:

"The Bourbons are restored. Rejoice, France, Spain, Portugal, Europe, rejoice! Nations of Europe, ye are brethren once more! The family of nations is complete. Embrace, rejoice! And thou, too, my much wronged country! my dear, abused, self-murdered country! bleeding as thou art, rejoice! The Bourbons are restored. The long agony is over. The Bourbons are restored!"

"Let us go home, Leonard," said Mrs. Bloommaert. "I never heard so much praise of the Bourbons before. My father did not approve of them. If Napoleon is done with, why did not the French people insist on a republic? They had Lafayette—and others."

Leonard answered only, "Yes." He did not wish to open the subject of the helplessness of France, nor point out how absurdly irrational it would be for the allied kings of Europe to found a republic in their midst. He felt weary of the subject, and the sense of the evening's failure affected him. It had been a disappointing day, what was the good of prolonging it? Sappha and Leonard might have fallen into the mistake of doing so, but Mrs. Bloommaert knew better. At the doorstep she positively dismissed Leonard, who could not quite hide the fact that he was willing to obey her. But Sappha, who had hoped to charm away this feeling of tediousness and lassitude when they were alone, was vexed at losing her opportunity.

"It was not kind of you, mother, to send Leonard off as soon as we had done with him. He was weary, too," she said.

"Weary! I should think he was," answered Mrs. Bloommaert; "he must be worn out with women to-day. Such a crowd of us as Annette got together."

"The women were not more disagreeable than the men, mother," said Sappha. "And I believe Leonard has gone straight to the militia guard-rooms—there are nothing but men there, and so he can rest."

"I hope he has not gone to any guard-room. Every one will be quarrelling with his neighbour to-night."

Leonard had, indeed, gone to the guard-room of the Jersey Blues, but his visit was decidedly against his inclination. He was as weary as Mrs. Bloommaert had supposed him to be—weary of the Bourbons, and of the passionate fratching about them; weary of men, and of women also; weary of companionship of all kinds; weary of noise and strain of the restless city; weary of life itself. Vital and large as his nervous force was, it had become exhausted; feeling had wasted it, and disappointment been equally depleting. He resolved when he turned from the Bloommaert house to go direct to his rooms in the City Hotel and seek in solitude and sleep a renewal of strength and hope. On the steps of the hotel an old acquaintance accosted him, and Leonard rather reluctantly asked "if he had come to see him?"

"Yes," answered the man. "I am in trouble, Mr. Murray, and I could think of no one but you to give me some advice. It is about Miss Martin. You remember pretty Sarah Martin? We were engaged, and she has broken the engagement. I am very unhappy. I do not know what to do. I think you can tell me."

"I am going to my rooms now. Come upstairs with me, McKenzie."

"I cannot. I must be back at the guard-room in half an hour. Will you not go with me? We can talk there well enough."

Then Leonard went with McKenzie, and after the little formalities with the men present in the guard-room were over, Leonard and McKenzie took chairs to an open window and began their consultation. And very soon Leonard threw off his lassitude and became heartily interested in his friend's trouble. Suddenly a voice, blatant and dictatorial, fell upon his consciousness. It was the voice of a man who had been a member of the company raised by Leonard, and who during the whole term of its service was a source of annoyance and disputing—a man of low birth and of a mean, envious nature, who had neither a good education nor good breeding, and, indeed, who affected to despise both. Leonard's youth, beauty, fine culture, and fine manners, added to his great wealth and popularity, roused at once Horace Gilson's envy; and envy in the close companionship of a military fort quickly grew to an almost uncontrollable hatred. And in Gilson's nature hatred had its proper soil; he was insensible to the nobler qualities of humanity, and persuaded himself—and other of his kind—that Leonard's gracious forbearance was not the fine courtesy of an officer to his subordinate, but the fear of a timid and effeminate spirit. Indeed, Leonard's three months' service had been made an hourly trial by the hardly concealed mockery and contempt of Horace Gilson. Of all men in the wide world he was the very last Leonard wished to see. He moved his chair a little nearer to McKenzie, and by so doing faced the open window only. McKenzie continued talking, unmindful of Gilson's entrance, but Leonard heard above all he said the sneering taunt and scoffing laugh of the man he despised and disliked. Every one and everything appeared to provoke his disdain, and it was not long before he turned his attention to the two men sitting apart at the window.

"Secrets! Secrets!" he cried with effusive familiarity. "We will have no secrets in a guard-room. Out with the ladies' names—if you are not ashamed of them."

Leonard looked indifferently out of the window; it was McKenzie's affair, not his. And McKenzie, laying his hand upon his pistol in an almost mechanical way, merely glanced at the bully and said: "You had better mind your own business, sir."

"I am not speaking to you, McKenzie," Gilson answered. "I am addressing Captain Murray, the great New York Adonis and lady killer! Come, captain, your latest victories?"

"Mr. Gilson," answered Leonard, "my friend and I are discussing private concerns. When we desire your company, we will let you know. In the meantime, we wish to be alone."

"Now, captain, no more airs from you. You have left the militia, you know—three months used up your patriotism," answered Gilson scornfully.

McKenzie rose in a passion. "Damn your impertinence, Gilson! I'll give you a——"

"Be quiet, Mac," interrupted Leonard. "The fool is drunk—you can't even horsewhip a drunken man." Then he took McKenzie firmly by the arm and both rose to leave the room.

"Drunk, eh?" cried Gilson in a rage. "Drunk! It is well for you both to get out of my way, for I'll pay you all I owe you yet, Murray—you, and your damned dollars! Go and see if you can buy a little common dog-courage with them."

"Let me knock the ranting bully down, Murray."

"He is not worth it."

By this time the men present were on their feet, some urging Murray to leave the room, some trying to talk reason into Gilson, who became more and more defiant as the objects of his abuse passed out of the hearing of it.

It was a wretched ending to a disagreeable day, and Leonard sat half through the midsummer night fretting and fuming over the incident. He was not a quarrelsome man, and a quarrel with Horace Gilson was an affair too low and despicable to contemplate. Why had McKenzie come to him with his trouble? He felt the injustice of the visit. If he had been a few minutes later he would have missed the man and the annoyance that had grown out of his sympathy with him. He looked wistfully out of the window towards the Bloommaert house, and remembered Sappha, but speedily exiled her from his thoughts, because he could not keep the scene at the guard-room out of them; and it seemed a sacrilege to have both in his consciousness at the same time.

However, after an irritating vigil of some hours he fell asleep with sheer weariness, and when he awakened near noon on the following day Nature had accomplished her renovating work. The Unseen Powers had cradled his soul into peace, cleared away the rack and wreckage of an unfortunate day, and filled his exhausted spirit with the miraculous strength of Faith and Hope.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Rose of Renunciation

AS Leonard dressed himself he recollected the guard-room quarrel and smiled. It seemed really so ridiculous and ineffectual; yet he resolved to avoid Gilson as much as possible. "The man was drunk," he thought, "but sober or drunk, he has an envious nature, and a tongue ready for ill words. Perhaps he may seek me out and continue his offensive behavior. What then?" He pondered this likelihood a few moments, and then asked himself cheerfully:

"Why should I worry about the probability of such a thing? As if it mattered." But it is hard to tell what matters, though safe enough to say that in conduct it is best not to make trifles of trifles. For there is an amazing vitality in some trifles, and we know not which may abortively pass and which may become of momentous importance.

Yet, for two days Leonard hardly thought of Gilson and his drunken abuse; or if it entered his mind it was only as an annoying and commonplace event that he was in no way responsible for. He had not one fear that it could possibly have any serious effect upon his life. And as it happened the two days following Annette's dinner party were exceedingly happy ones to Sappha and Leonard. One of them was spent with Madame Bloommaert in Nassau Street, and another with Annette at the Semple house. Then came Saturday, and Leonard went early in the afternoon to the Bowling Green. It was a very warm day, the parlour windows in Judge Bloommaert's house were open, and Sappha was sitting in the sunshine happily indolent. She smiled a thousand welcomes as he entered, but did not move, for her lap was full of knotted embroidery silks, and Leonard seated himself at her side, and together they began to slowly unravel and sort the tangled skeins. So happy, so merry, were they! their hands touching, their heads touching, light laughter and loving whispers feeding their hearts with a full content.

When the judge came home Sappha and Leonard rose gaily to meet him, but they were both chilled by his manner, which was constrained and unfriendly. A sense of something unpleasant swept out of cognisance the innocent mirth that had pervaded the room; and in a moment its mental atmosphere was changed. It was embarrassing, because Leonard did not like to presume there was an offence—it might be only a passing mood, and the mood might be caused by something or by some person outside of their interference. So the suddenly checked lovers sat silent, or only made whispered remarks about the condition of the silks.

One of these remarks attracted the judge's attention, and he turned to the apparently busy young man and said: "Sappha has given you a pretty tangle to straighten out—Leonard." He spoke Leonard's name with a hesitation that was almost like a withdrawal of the position that had been given him, and Leonard felt the reluctance keenly, yet he answered with much cheerfulness.

"Patience will win her way, sir—she does in every tangle. One by one the knots are being untied."

"You might cut them," said the judge.

"That would be wasteful and foolish, sir. No one would be the gainer, and no one would be satisfied. I will unravel them—with Sappha's help."

"Well, Leonard,"—this time the name was spoken a little more pleasantly—"well, Leonard, I can tell you there is an ugly tangle up the street for you either to cut, or to unravel. And I must say, I am astonished, not to say displeased, at your neglecting it for three days."

"A tangle up the street, sir,—a tangle I have neglected!"

"You certainly have not forgotten your quarrel with Horace Gilson?"

"Oh, I had no quarrel with the fellow! How could I? He was drunk."

"Not too drunk to tell you that you had only three months' worth of patriotism; not too drunk to bid you buy a little dog-courage with your dirty dollars. Sir, you ought to have stopped such remarks as quickly as they were made—yes, sir, they ought to have been stopped peremptorily, whether they were drunk or sober remarks."

"But, judge, you cannot talk to a drunken man—you cannot reason with a drunken man——"

"Well, then, you can knock him down. That is an argument even a drunken man will understand."

"Father!" cried Sappha with indignation, as she stood with flashing eyes before him. "Father, to knock a drunken man down would be as bad as to knock an insane man down. In both cases it would be brutal."

"When men make themselves into brutes it is just to treat them like brutes."

"I never heard such nonsense! such cruel nonsense! I think Leonard did quite right to ignore the fellow."

"You have no business, miss, to think anything about such subjects. Go to your mother."

"Mother went to Nassau Street long ago."

"I want her. Tell her to come home immediately. And I do not want you. It is necessary for me to speak to Leonard alone."

"Very well. I shall go for mother." But ere she left the room she took Leonard's hands in hers and kissed him. There was a whispered word also, which the judge did not hear, but the girl's act of sympathy was irritating enough. He drew his lips wide and tight, and as soon as Sappha closed the door he said:

"Now, sir, what are you going to do? Gilson has been vapouring from Dan to Beersheba about your—cowardice, and your want of patriotism; and Mr. Ogden told me that when he instanced your frequent generous loans to the city Gilson laughed and said you had made forty per cent. on them. 'You and your father,' he added, 'were both canny Scots, and knew cleverly how to rub one dollar into two.'"

"Judge, my father——"

"Wait a little. Why have you not been in any of your usual resorts since Wednesday night? It does not look right—the rascal has had a clear field for all the scurrilous lies he chose to tell."

"Sir, if I had known that the man was lying soberly about me, I would surely have given him openly the name he merits. But I did not dream that he would dare to say out of liquor what he said in liquor; for he is a quaking coward, and as fearful as a whipped child. Others are behind him in this bluster. Alas, my money has never brought me anything but envy and ill-will—no matter how heartily I give it! What would you advise me to do, sir?"

"Make the man hold his tongue."

"How?"

The judge was silent a moment, then with a touch of scorn he answered: "There is the law. Sue him for slander. He is said to be worth twenty thousand dollars. Lay your damages at twenty thousand. Your friend, Mr. Burr, will defend your case very feelingly, no doubt."

And with some anger Leonard answered: "That course is out of the question, sir."

"Well, then, write a letter to the newspapers."

"I do not propose to lend the fellow's words so much importance."

"Then give him his lies back generally, and particularly—give him them back on the street, and in the guard-room, or wherever you meet him—and make a point of meeting him, here, there, and everywhere."

"That is what I propose to do. Then, sir, egged on by those whose cue he is now following, he will probably challenge me. Shall I accept his challenge?"

"I am not your conscience keeper, Leonard."

"Put the question then, as a matter of social expediency."

"If the social verdict is what you want, ask Achille St. Ange. He is a good authority."

"Once more, sir. If I lift this foolish business to the moral plane, what do you say?"

"Zounds! Leonard, I have told you already that morally judging this question I hold the Decalogue as a finality!" And with these words the judge rose to his feet. It was evident he had no more to say on the subject, and Leonard bid him "good-afternoon" and left the house. There had been throughout the interview a want of sympathy in the judge's manner that insinuated suspicion, or at least uncertainty, and Leonard was pained and offended by it. Judge Bloommaert had known him intimately, yet he had permitted the evil tongue of a stranger to influence his own experience. Angry tears rose unconsciously to his eyes, and he asked himself what did it profit a man to be truthful and generous, if any dastardly liar could smear and cancel the noblest record? He walked up the Bowling Green with a burning heart, but Sappha had whispered her promise to be near the statue; and he soon saw the flutter of her white gown as she came to meet him. They entered the enclosure and sat down on a bench facing that heroic representation of Washington, which, made of wood, shaped and coloured to imitate the rosiest glow of life, was the best artistic effort New York was capable of one hundred years ago.* But even if Sappha and Leonard had been conscious of its artistic defects, they cared little for them at that hour. Their own affairs were too urgent, too perilously near to trouble again. And though Sappha was full of sympathy and quite determined to uphold Leonard in all he had done and was going to do, yet she at once gave vent to her womanish fears in the essentially provoking query: "Oh, Leonard, why did you not show yourself in the city the last three days? You might have known people would say you were afraid of that dreadful man."

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* This marvellous production remained on the Bowling Green until 1843, when the city's art critics had advanced so far as to allege the brilliant statue was not a work of art; and in deference to their opinion it was sold to a collector of antiquities, who kept it forty years. Then he died, and it was sold at auction for $300. It is now in a cigar store on One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, where it fills the position usually given to the wooden Indian. These facts are noticed in the hope that the millionaire patriots congregating round the Bowling Green may find it in their hearts not only to release the historic statue from its degrading position, but also to place upon the empty pedestal a statue of Washington worthy of the situation and of the great city it appeals to.

"Dear Sappha!" he answered, "will you, too, oblige me to explain that my absence from my usual haunts the last three days was quite accidental; you wanted me to go to Nassau Street with you Thursday, and your grandmother kept us all day. You wanted me to go to the Semple house with you Friday, and Annette and Achille kept us all day. This morning my lawyer brought to the hotel a number of papers and accounts, and it was noon before we had reviewed them. Then we had a meal together, and afterwards I came to you. How could I imagine Gilson's unmerited abuse of me? And it seems I had no friend or acquaintance willing to take the trouble to tell me how the man was slandering me behind my back—everything, and every one, was against me."

"Father told you as soon as he heard the scandal."

"Yes, but not very kindly. There was a taste of doubt in all he said. And he would give me no positive straightforward advice. I feel completely at sea as regards his wishes. I am going this evening to talk the matter over with Achille."

"Oh, no! Oh, no! Achille will urge you to fight the low creature. I cannot bear that, Leonard."

"There is not the least danger. Gilson would be a child in my hands."

"You never know. Accidents happen—you must be out of practice, and then, it cannot be right. I don't believe you are afraid—I am sure you are not—but I do not want you to fight. I am afraid—I am a mortal coward about you. You must not accept a challenge, if he sends one. I shall die of fear. I shall, indeed."

"If it should become necessary to fight, I am any man's equal. My sword and my hands are trained to perfection. Even Achille admits my superiority. I, personally, should not be in the least danger. In fact, I am both with sword and pistol so much more expert than Gilson that it would be almost cowardice, as well as cruelty, to meet him in a duel. There could be no justice in such a trial of right or wrong—but how few people can know this? Or knowing it, feel that it might bind me as an honourable man to refuse the duel."

"I pray you, Leonard, take my advice, and do not go to Achille. It would be 'fight, of course you must fight,' with Achille. He would hear of nothing else. And for my sake, Leonard, you must not fight. In the long run, father would be angry if you did, and perhaps make it an excuse for separating us. Leonard, promise me on your honour not to fight. If you come to me with bloody hands I will not take them. And if you let out life with either sword or pistol your hand will be forevermore bloody. No water will cleanse it, no good woman will touch it, no saint in heaven clasp it—better cut it off, and cast it from you, than stain it for all eternity." She was quivering with feeling, her eyes were full of tears, and her voice had those tones of tender authority which subjugate as well as persuade.

"My dear darling little preacher," Leonard answered, "I promise you these hands shall never do anything to make them unworthy to clasp yours." And he took her hand, pressed it firmly between his own, and kissed his promise upon it. Then she rose smiling; they walked together to madame's house, and at the gate they parted.

But though somewhat comforted, Leonard did not feel as if the way before him had been either cleared or lightened; in fact, his promise to Sappha had in some measure closed the only apparent exit out of the dilemma. At the moment of promising he had been carried away by his love, and had not thought of contingencies; but as soon as he was alone "the tangle" became more and more of a tangle; and unfortunately it was Saturday evening; the streets were quiet, business nearly over for the week, men generally either at home with their families, or enjoying in their company the sail up the river or the concert on the Battery.

Not knowing what to do, or where to go, he did nothing, and went nowhere but to his rooms in the City Hotel. He was determined to make no false step. Hurry in this matter might have calamitous consequences. Out of just such false, wicked words lifelong tragedies had often come. And there was Sappha—he must consider Sappha before himself.

The next day being Sabbath, he went to the Garden Street Church in the morning and to Trinity Church in the afternoon. In both houses he met acquaintances, whose recognition of him appeared to be cooler and more constrained than usual. But then he knew that he was suspicious, and the change was probably only an imaginary one. When he left Trinity he walked northward to the Semple house, and on the way met at least two painful incidents, which were not imagination: When opposite the City Hall Park he saw Doctor Stevens and his wife approaching him, and as soon as they perceived Leonard they crossed Broadway and entered the park. And as this movement took them off the direct way to their home Leonard was justified in believing they had made it to avoid a meeting with him. The circumstance pained and angered him. He turned quickly into Chambers Street, and saw Mr. Leonard Fisher coming towards him. Now, Mr. Fisher was one of the officers of the Washington Benevolent Society, of which society Leonard had been the most active member. On business of relief and charity he had come constantly in contact with Mr. Fisher, and always in a temper of friendly courtesy. He expected nothing but a kindly greeting from him, but when he was half a block distant Mr. Fisher crossed the street, and as

Leonard passed he kept his eyes stubbornly set on some object in front of him.

Burning with a sense of wrong and injustice, Leonard hastened forward and threw himself upon Achille's friendship. Here he was not disappointed. Achille entered into his feelings and espoused his cause with complete understanding and ardent sympathy. He acknowledged Francis de Mille had said something of the slander to him on the previous day, but that he had laughed away the words as utterly preposterous, and De Mille had let the subject drop. "But," he added, "it can be dropped no longer. Judge Bloommaert is right. The rascal has had a clear field too long—now, he must be made to acknowledge his lies, as lies; and then hold his tongue about your affairs forever."

"What is to be done, Achille?"

"There is but one way—for a man of honour. You must challenge him immediately."

"I suppose so—but Sappha is distressed at the idea. I fear I shall lose her if I do. And the judge is against the practice."

"Those questions come afterwards. Women know not their own minds. If you fail to punish this ill-tongued fellow, Sappha, in her heart, will despise you—and the judge also. Take my word for that—so will all honourable men. You remember that affair in New Orleans? Duplicate it."

This last remark seemed to give a sudden light and hope to Leonard. He smiled and said cheerfully: "That would be sufficient; thank you, Achille. Now then, where am I most likely to meet Gilson? Do you know his haunts or the places he most frequents?"

"We can easily find them out. Our host of the City Hotel will doubtless be able to give us information. Look here, Leonard, I have the plan!" and he took paper and pencil from his pocket, and the two bent over it in consultation for about half an hour. Then Annette joined them, and they went to the dinner table, and afterwards Achille told Annette the dilemma into which Leonard had fallen. He said nothing of a duel, however; neither did Annette, a circumstance which would have convinced any woman that she anticipated that result, and was carefully pondering it. That Leonard stayed with them all night, and that Achille went out with him early in the morning, was to her substantial confirmation of her suspicions.

Privately, she was very angry. Why should her husband relate himself and his spotless honour with a man whose character had been so shamefully defamed? It was in Annette's eyes a piece of Quixotic imprudence. She thought Achille ought to have remembered that he had a wife and daughter, and that, at least, her approval should have been asked. She said to herself that it was not unlikely there was some truth in all Mr. Gilson had asserted. Men so available as Leonard Murray were likely to be womanish; and he was always dangling after Sappha Bloommaert. Gilson had been talking for three days. It was strange, indeed, that Leonard had not stopped such imputations at once. "I don't believe he was ignorant of them," she said, and in her passion she uttered the words aloud: "He knew all about Gilson's abuse, but he thought the man would grow weary, or go away, or that Achille or some of his friends, would lift the quarrel for him. And when none of these conveniences have come, then he has sought out my husband. Oh, yes! he knew Achille was always ready for a fight—it is a shame! I am not going to permit it; Leonard Murray must conduct his own quarrels."

To such thoughts she nursed her surmised wrongs all day; and as Achille did not return home until very late she had become hysterical under the pressure of their certainty. Nor did her husband's evasive carelessness allay her anxiety; she was not consoled by his smiles, nor by the light kiss with which he advised her "to sleep and forget her imaginary fears." This course was not possible to Annette; she lay awake considering and planning until the dawn. Then, when she ought to have been on the alert, she fell into the dead sleep of utter mental and physical weariness.

In this interval Achille arose, dressed with some care, and calling Annette's maid, left with her his "remembrances for madame, and the assurance that he would be home for dinner." Annette did not believe the message. She asked for the hour, and decided there was yet a possibility of finding her uncle Bloommaert at his home. While she hastily dressed, her carriage was prepared, and she reached the Bowling Green house just as the judge was descending the steps. She arrested him midway. "Uncle," she sobbed, "I am in trouble about Achille. I want you to help me."

"What is the matter with Achille? Have you been scolding? Has he run away from you?"

"I cannot bear jokes this morning, uncle. I think Achille has gone to fight a duel."

"Nonsense!"

"Yes, I am sure he is going to fight that low creature, Horace Gilson. You know——"

"Twofold nonsense. He has nothing to do with the man. That is Leonard Murray's business."

"But Leonard came to Achille on Sunday night. He was full of shame and anger about every one passing him without recognition; and I am sure he must have deserved the slight, or Doctor and Mrs. Stevens and Mr. Fisher would not have done so—on a Sunday, just coming out of church, too, when people ought to feel friendly."

"Come, come, Annette, this is all foolishness, and I am in no mood for it this morning. If Leonard has been insulted, he knows how to right himself—and that, without Achille's help. Gilson is a low, scurrilous creature, and I hope Leonard will give him a lesson."

"Uncle! Uncle! You must not go away without helping me."

"Good gracious, Annette! What am I to do? What can I do? If Achille wishes to stand by Leonard in this matter, nothing I can say will prevent it. And, by George, I do not intend to say anything! As for Achille fighting Gilson, that is absurd. Leonard Murray is no special favourite of mine, but I am sure he is a young man who can do his own fighting, and who will let no one else do it for him. Leonard will fight Gilson, if fighting is necessary."

"But, uncle, you ought not to put me off in this way. I shall go to grandmother and tell her."

"Well, Annette, that is a dreadful threat—but you will find your grandmother no more sympathetic, in this case, than I am."

"*So!* Perhaps, however, you will attend to what aunt Carlita says. Come into the house and let us ask her."

"I will not waste any more time, Annette; nor will I sanction you annoying your aunt this morning. She has had one of her worst headaches all night long, and has just fallen on sleep. Do not attempt to awaken her. And you must say nothing unpleasant to Sappha. She is worried already, and she has been up with her mother all night. Do have self-control enough to keep your ridiculous fears to yourself—or if you cannot, then go to your grandmother, or better still, go home. Home is the proper place for foolish women, full of their own fears and fancies."

With these words he went down the steps, and Annette watched him angrily. For a moment or two she considered his advice to "go to her grandmother"; then suddenly, with a passionate motion of her head, she lifted the knocker and let it fall several times will unmistakable decision.

Sappha, who was busy in the back parlour, ran hastily into the hall, and when she saw Annette advanced to meet her with a lifted finger and a "hush!" upon her lips. "Mother has had such a bad night," she said softly, "and now she is sleeping. Come in here, Annette, as quietly as possible. What is the matter? I hope Jonaca is well. Why, Annette, you are crying!"

"Yes, and it is you who ought to be crying! Yet you appear perfectly unconcerned."

"But why ought I to be crying? You know mother has had these headaches all her life. This attack is no worse than usual."

"*Mother! Mother!* I am not thinking of your mother! I am thinking of Leonard Murray."

"Is anything wrong with Leonard?"

"I do not know what you call wrong. The whole city considers him shamefully wrong! No one will speak to him! He is disgraced beyond everything! I am ashamed, I am burning with anger, to think that he might have been through you connected with my family—I mean the De Vries family. And I am distracted about Achille. He came to Achille on Sunday night——"

"Who came to Achille?"

"Leonard Murray, of course. And he almost cried about the way people had insulted him—coming out of church, too. And, I suppose, indeed, I am sure, that Achille promised to help him, and stand by him, and fight that man Gilson for him——"

"Stop, Annette! You are not speaking the truth now. You are, at least, under a false impression. If Gilson is to be fought, Leonard will fight him. Make no mistake about that. Leonard is no coward; and a man need not be foolhardy to prove himself brave—only cowards are afraid to be called cowards. My father has said that very often."

"And pray what comes of such ideas? When a man is insulted they lead to nothing. I have just been talking to my uncle Gerardus, and he thinks precisely as I do. To let a man go up and down calling you a thief and a coward, and say nothing, and do nothing, is neither moral nor respectable. That is Leonard Murray's position. And I think it a shame that I have to be kept on the rack for two days about your lover. I never troubled you about Achille; and I am not well, and when I am sick then dear little Jonaca is sick —and I have had to get up this morning hours before the proper time and leave my house, and my child about your lover, just because he cannot manage his own troubles; troubles, also, that he has made for himself."

"You do not know what you are saying, Annette. Your temper carries you beyond truth. Leonard did not make this trouble——"

"Oh, yes, he did. His pride and self-conceit are intolerable. His patronage of people is offensive. And Achille and I have often noticed how purse-proud he was——"

"It is a shame to say such things, Annette. You know they are slander—wicked slander! No man was ever less concerned about his wealth, in fact, he——"

"Oh, we can let that subject drop—we all know how he spreads abroad his money. I am speaking now of his cowardice. Every one is speaking of it; rich and poor alike. He is a byword on the Exchange. He will never have another invitation to any respectable house. Even I must shut my doors against him—and, to be sure, no nice girl will ever be seen with him again."

"All that you are saying is cruelly false, Annette; you are trying to pain and terrify me——"

"What good would that do me? I am only telling you what you ought to know."

"But why? Why are you telling me?"

"Because I am angry at you. Why did you advise Leonard to come to Achille for help?"

"I did not advise him to come to Achille. How could Achille help Leonard? The idea!"

"I say plainly that Achille is now seeking that man Gilson, and if he meets him before Leonard does—which he is sure to do—he will challenge him at once."

"How ridiculous! Achille has no quarrel with Gilson. Why should he challenge him?"

"Because of the things he has charged Leonard with. And Achille's honour is so sensitive, and he is so passionate, the dispute will end in Achille making it his own quarrel. Then he will fight Gilson, before Leonard even succeeds in meeting him."

"I hope he will!" said Sappha with affected satisfaction.

"You wicked girl! To say such a thing to a wife and a mother! Oh, now, I think you are none too good for Leonard Murray! By all means marry him—only for decency's sake take yourselves out of New York! There are places where wealth will cloak cowardice. England, for instance!"

"All these stories you tell about Leonard are downright lies. Yes, I shall marry him, and we shall stay here—in New York. Do you understand? And if you were not insane with temper I would promise myself never to speak to you again, Annette St. Ange. Cowardice, indeed! You, yourself, are at this moment suffering from cowardice. Your fear of Achille being hurt has made you suspicious, unjust, slanderous. And Leonard and I must endure your shameful words—a woman has no redress. I am going to leave you. You have willingly wounded and insulted me—without any reason at all. I hope you will be sorry for it——"

"I am sorry, Sappha. Do not go away. I am sorry for you—that is the reason of my temper; and it is Leonard, not you, I am angry at."

"We will not name Leonard. If he is all you say, he is not fit for you to talk about."

"No, indeed!"

"I think you had better go home, Annette. You are making yourself, and me, also, ill; for nothing."

"For nothing! That is all the thanks I receive for getting up so early and coming to warn and advise you."

"I wish you had not come."

"I shall go now and tell grandmother. She will perhaps be able to make you see things properly. I hope you will not make yourself sick about Leonard——"

"It is not my way."

"If a girl's lover turns out badly, she ought not to cry about him—it is neither moral nor respectable. I say this, Sappha, politely and kindly."

"Thank you, politely and kindly, Annette."

"I hope Leonard may come out of this affair better than we think."

"Thank you. I hope Achille may come out of this affair better than we think."

The clash of the front door emphasised this provoking bit of courtesy, and Sappha flew like a bird to her room, that she might conceal the tumult of outraged feelings warring within her. And then as soon as she was alone all her anger fled from Annette to Leonard. She accused him with bitter unreason; for at this hour she was insensible to everything but the painfully humiliating results of what she still mentally called "his quarrel" with Horace Gilson. And, oh, how Annette had hurt her! For Annette had not yet learned how to endure; and they who can bear nothing are themselves unbearable.

For two hours she gave full sway to her insurgent feelings; but at the last every mental struggle ended in her blaming Leonard. Leonard, for her sake, ought to have avoided such a degrading quarrel—Leonard ought to have faced it the first thing the following morning, instead of that he had trifled away the whole day in Nassau Street, and the next day at Annette's, and now Annette felt that she had the right to call his courtesy cowardice.

"Well, then, it looks like cowardice!" she sobbed passionately, "and then Saturday he told me some story about his lawyer detaining him—never once did he name Gilson to me. It looks like—— *Oh, wee! oh, wee!* my heart will break with the shame of it! Every one will pity me. Even if some make excuses for Leonard, I shall know it is only pity for me—only pity! I cannot bear it! I cannot think of it! Father and mother must take me away—no, no, I must face the shame, smile at it, what they call 'live it down.' Oh, what shall I say? What shall I do? And mother is too ill to trouble. And to father I cannot complain of Leonard. Oh, Leonard! Leonard! Leonard!"

And it was while tossed from wave to wave on this flood tide of anger and sorrow that she was told Leonard was waiting to see her. She rose up hastily. Had she taken a few moments to calm herself everything might have been different. But even her opening [illegible] the doors between herself and her lover betrayed the whirl and tumult of the feelings that distracted her. Nor was this mental storm soothed by Leonard's presence. He came eagerly forward to meet her; a pleasant smile on his face and a white rose in his hand. She took the flower from him, and threw it down upon the table; and he regarded her with amazement. Her face, her attitude, the passion of her movements, arrested the words he was eager to utter; and in that fateful pause Sappha's unguarded, unconsidered accusations fell like the voice of doom upon his senses.

"You are a byword among men! No nice girl will be seen with you! You will never again be asked to any respectable house! Annette says so! She will be even compelled to shut her door against you!"

"Sappha, Sappha! Do you know what you are saying?"

"Only too well I know it. Annette has just been here. She has told me all. You left her to tell me. Why did you not come yourself? Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, all these days I have been in suspense and misery."

"Listen to me, Sappha, I——"

"It is too late now. Annette has told me. I have heard it all—my heart is broken—I shall die of shame. Every one will pity me. I cannot, I cannot bear it——"

"Stop one moment, Sappha. Do you believe Annette? Do you think she will be forced to shut her door against me?"

"She says so."

"Then Judge Bloommaert may have the same obligation—and you also. If you can believe this, you can believe anything that is said against me, your promised husband. It is I who am heartbroken. It is I who must feel shame. It is I who must go all my life in the fiery shadow of wrong and injustice. Sappha, you have known me as no other person has known me,—in my inmost soul,—and yet you can believe I deserve such treatment?"

"How can I tell? If you had done anything to right yourself——"

"Oh, that is not the question. You should have trusted me through everything, and in spite of every one. You have failed me just when I needed most your love and confidence. If Annette tells you I ought to be shut out of your heart and house, you will believe her! What is your love worth? It is only a summer day's idyll. The first chill wind of disapproval kills it. I will go before I am shut out. In future days it may be easier for you to remember that I closed the door on my own happiness. Oh, Sappha, Sappha! lighter than vapour is your love—and I had built my life upon it!"

His face expressed more indignation than distress. He lifted the rose she had flung down and looked at it with a moment's pity; then he pushed it toward her.

"It is my last offering," he said. "Take it. And as it fades, forget me. I shall never give you shame or trouble again."

Then anger took entire possession of Sappha; and anger does everything wrong. She lifted the rose and cried out amid her passionate weeping:

"I will not wait for it to fade. No, I will forget you *now! now! now!*" and as she uttered the words she ruthlessly tore off the white petals, scattered them on the floor at his feet—and was gone.

Her tears, her shivering words, the utter passion of misery and tenderness that made the action almost like the slaying of a living creature, so stupefied and fascinated Leonard that for a moment he could neither move nor speak. When he recovered himself he ran to the foot of the stairs and called her. "Sappha! Sappha!" he cried. "Sappha, come back to me, I have something to tell you." But she was gone. A slight flutter of her white gown as she turned the last angle was all he saw; and if she heard his appeal she did not answer it.

For a few minutes he waited, but the laughter of the negroes in the kitchen, coming faintly through the baize-lined doors, was the only sound he heard. Then he returned to the parlour and carefully gathered, one by one, the torn leaves. The last note Sappha had sent him was in his pocket book. He placed them between the sheets and, shutting them in the book, put it in his breast.

What was he so still for? What had he done? What had come to him? Blast, or blight, or fire, or fever? He picked up the torn rose leaves as if they were bits of his heart, and the door clashed behind him and seemed to shake the very foundations of his life. He knew that he was walking, but his heart hung heavy at his feet. All he loved was behind him—he was drifting, drifting into a darkness where love and joy would never again find him. Oh, it is only

> "——the Lord above,
> He only knows the strength of Love;
> He only knows, and He only can,
> The root of Love that is in a man."

CHAPTER
NINE

The Reproof of the Sword

LEONARD'S suffering was very great, but Sappha's was still greater. Wounded love, injustice, and disappointment can inflict mental distress that has no parallel in physical pain, but with Sappha's misery was mingled the intolerable drop of remorse for her hasty passion. Now that all was over, now that Leonard had gone away forever, there came to her the clearest conviction that she had done him a great wrong. She remembered that she had not even given him an opportunity to explain circumstances—she had met him with passionate reproaches and flung his love gift, torn and mutilated, at his feet. After that shameful, piteous rejection what could Leonard do but go away? It was an act for which there could be no apology and no forgiveness. She cried out with the anguish this cruel, hopeless reflection caused her; and had Leonard been really present she would have fallen at his feet in an agony of love and repentance.

Prone upon her bed she lay, torturing herself by a thousand self-reproaches, and by a perpetual memory of that last look of pained amazement with which her lover had regarded her. She could not put it from her, it seemed to have exorcised every other memory of his face. With heart-broken sobs she sent after him one cry, " Forgive me! Oh, Leonard, forgive me! " But the void between them swallowed it up in silence. There was nothing to be done. The long, long days and years before her held only frustrate longings and despair. This reflection came to her as a finality, and she ceased weeping and protesting and lay dumb and passive like a child smitten by a power it can neither appease nor comprehend.

Her mother found her in this mood, and when Sappha said, " I cannot come to dinner to-day, I am in trouble. Annette told me things about Leonard, and I have sent him away forever! " the mother understood and was full of pity.

" Do not try to come down, dear," she answered. " As soon as your father goes out, I will return to you."

" Are you better, mother? Are you able to attend to father? "

" Yes, yes, I am well again. Ah, me, there is always sorrow at somebody's heart! "

" It is my own fault, mother. Leonard is not to blame. I will tell you—after a little while."

Then Mrs. Bloommaert went with a heavy heart to serve the dinner; for whether heads are aching or hearts breaking dinner is a fact that cannot be excused. She was full of anxious thought as she went about the table, placing sauces, condiments, and wines, and arranging the small details which always pleased her husband. He had been depressed and angry concerning Leonard Murray's conduct for some days, and she wondered how the news of Sappha's dismissal of the young man would affect him.

Contrary to all expectation he entered the house in high spirits. He was delighted to find his wife better, and able to give him her company and sympathy; and as soon as they were alone he began to talk to her about Leonard in a manner full of pride and satisfaction. Nor was he much dashed by the information that there had been a quarrel between the lovers, and a final separation.

"Final separation!" he repeated, with an incredulous laugh. "Nonsense. That is a regular climax to a love fever. They will be more devoted than ever in a week's time. Tell her what I have just told you, and they will be friends in half an hour."

"I fear not. Leonard has shown wonderful patience so far, but my father used to say 'beware the anger of a patient man'; for when once his patience has given way, his anger is not to be pacified."

"All foolishness, Carlita. Go and tell Sappha everything. I promised to meet St. Ange about three o'clock; you see I have not any time to spare now."

"I do not know what Annette said to Sappha—something ill-natured, no doubt; but I wonder St. Ange did not give her strict orders to keep her tongue quiet about this business."

"You wonder St. Ange did not give Annette 'strict orders.' Well, Carlita, I wonder at your simplicity. Who can order a bad-tempered woman's tongue? Tell Sappha I have gone with St. Ange to see Leonard. Doubtless I shall bring him home with me."

He went out with this pleasant anticipation, and Mrs. Bloommaert arranged a little dinner for her daughter, and sent it upstairs to her. "You must eat, Sappha," she said, "you can't live on your tears. And I have good news for you—very good news. See now, how nice this roast chicken looks, and the beans, and the strawberry tart; and I made the tea myself; yes, dear, you must have a cup of tea, and you must first tell me all that Annette, the cruel ill-natured woman, said to you."

This confidence helped Sappha wonderfully. She could rightly enough blame Annette, and there was relief in shifting so much of the reproach from herself. And Mrs. Bloommaert felt no scruple in throwing the whole weight of the unfortunate affair on Annette. "It would never have happened, never!" she said, "if Annette had been minding her house and her baby instead of following Achille round; and then because she could not find him she must come and vent her home-made wretchedness on you. I wish I had heard her! She called Leonard a coward, did she?"

"She said every respectable person thought him one, and she repeated many things about him getting enormous interest from the city—oh, mother, I cannot go over it again."

"There is no need to do so. Leonard Murray has turned all such ideas topsy-turvy. Now I am going to tell you all about it, and you will see how well he has managed this miserable business. On Sunday he went to see Achille, and Achille told him he could forbear no longer, and though Leonard thought it was a kind of cowardice to fight a man so inferior in skill both with sword and pistol to himself, Achille convinced him there was no other way to prevent Gilson lying. So early on Monday morning Achille called upon Gilson. He first presented to him a paper acknowledging all his accusations against Leonard to be false and malicious, requiring him to sign it. But Gilson fell into a great passion, and said he would fight St. Ange for daring to offer him such an insult; and Achille answered, 'it would give him a supreme pleasure to allow him an opportunity as soon as his friend, Mr. Murray, had received satisfaction.' Then he gave him Leonard's challenge. The fellow threw it carelessly down on the table, and said 'he was going to Boston on important affairs, but when he returned he would make immediate arrangements to meet Mr. Murray and teach him to mind his own business.' 'On the contrary,' said Achille, 'you will meet Mr. Murray before you go to Boston. You will meet him to-morrow morning at half-past seven o'clock in Hahn's wood, Hoboken. You know the place. Or if there is any other place you prefer, I am here to make arrangements.' Gilson said, 'one place was as good as another.' Then they agreed that the weapons should be rapiers, and Gilson laughed scornfully, and 'hoped the clearing at Hahn's wood was not too large, for he intended close quarters. Murray,' he said, 'could not have half an acre to skip about in.' To which fresh insult Achille answered that if Mr. Gilson wished close quarters he felt sure Mr. Murray would be delighted to fight on a billiard table."

"I like Achille, mother, yes I do!"

"Achille is a good friend in need. He made all other arrangements for the duel, and Gilson promised that he and his friend Myron Hays would be on the ground at half-past seven the following morning. He used a deal of very bad language in making these arrangements. Your father said we could imagine it as bad as we chose, and that then it would come far short of the reality."

"So there was a duel this morning! Oh, mother, if I had only known!"

"Do not hurry me, Sappha. I want to tell you all just as it happened. Leonard did not trust Gilson's promise, nor did Achille. They determined to watch him; and they found out two things: first, that he intended leaving New York for Boston soon after seven; second, that he had ordered breakfast for himself and Myron Hays fifteen minutes before seven at the City Hotel."

"But, mother, Gilson must have known that Leonard stayed at the City Hotel?"

"Of course he knew; but he felt sure Leonard would be crossing the river at that time. Then he would have taken his breakfast, sending the while repeated inquiries as to whether any one had seen Leonard or St. Ange, and affecting great indignation at their non-appearance. Finally some insolent message of future defiance and punishment would have been left with the proprietor for Leonard. Oh, can you not see through the foolish, cowardly plan?"

"It was a contemptible scheme, and full of weak points, mother," answered Sappha.

"It would have answered well enough; it would, at least, have thrown doubt and contempt on both men. Fortunately Leonard and St. Ange followed Gilson so closely that they were at his side ere he had finished giving the order for serving his coffee. 'At present,' said St. Ange very politely, 'there is not time for coffee. We will cross the river at once, sir,' and Gilson answered, 'I am going to Boston on most important business. Mr. Murray must have got my letter explaining.' Then Leonard said, 'You never wrote me any letter, sir. And you are not going to Boston, you are going to Hoboken, and that at once.' Gilson still insisted that he would fight Leonard when he came back from Boston, and St. Ange told him he could have that satisfaction if he wished it; but first of all, he must fulfil his present engagement. 'All is ready for it, he continued; 'a boat waits for you and

Mr. Hays at the foot of the garden, and another boat for Mr. Murray and myself will keep yours in sight.' Then the man looked at his second, and Mr. Hays said it was proper to go at once, and he was thus morally, or unmorally, forced into compliance. At the last moment Gilson 'supposed arms and a doctor had been remembered,' and St. Ange told him those duties had been delegated to him and properly attended to. 'The doctor,' he said, 'was in their boat, and the swords also,' the latter having been approved by Mr. Hays on the previous day, at which time it was also agreed that Gilson should have his choice of the two weapons. St. Ange told your father there had been several irregularities, but that all had been arranged with perfect fairness by himself and Mr. Hays."

At this juncture Sappha lost all control of her emotions and began to weep and lament; and her mother rather sharply continued: "Tears are not needed at all, Sappha. Leonard was perfectly calm. Of his own safety he had not a fear. He and St. Ange kept Gilson's boat in sight until they landed; then the ground was marked off, and the men threw away their coats and vests and received their swords from the seconds. I cannot tell you just what happened, but your father could make it plain enough I dare say. To me it was only thrust and parry, touch and go, for a few minutes, then Leonard made a feint at Gilson's breast, but by a movement instantaneous as a thought nailed his right foot to the ground with his rapier. The man shrieked, and would have seized Leonard's sword, but that action was instantly prevented by the seconds. The affair was over. Gilson was at Leonard's mercy, and when he withdrew his sword St. Ange said, 'Doctor, the case is now yours. And then turning to Gilson he continued, 'Mr. Gilson, if you cannot control your tongue in the future, we will do this as often as you like.' "

" I hope the man will not die, mother! "

" Oh, no! Leonard intended only to punish him. He will have a few weeks' severe pain, and may have to use a crutch for a longer time—perhaps he may not dance any more; but he only received what he richly deserved."

" But I do not see, mother, how this duel will put Leonard right in people's estimation."

" Oh, my dear, St. Ange took good care to secure witnesses to Gilson's cowardly attempt to get away; and the men who rowed the two boats were there, to report for the newspapers. They heard much conversation I have not repeated. Your father also thinks Myron Hays, though he would not say much, was deceived and very indignant. You may be sure that St. Ange and Leonard arranged for a full vindication. Now, Sappha, wash your face and dress yourself prettily. Father said he would bring Leonard back to tea with him."

" Leonard will not come with father. He will never come again, I know! I know! "

"If he does not, his behaviour will be cruel and dishonourable. Why did he not tell you about the duel!"

"He could not—I did not give him a moment's opportunity. It was my fault—all my fault. I was so angry at what Annette told me that I met him in a passion, and before he had time to tell me why he had stayed away and what had occurred I shocked him with Annette's false charges, one upon the other, without any pause, until I told him that Annette was going to shut her door against him. Then he asked me if we also intended to shut our door against him, and mother, I have no excuse—there is no excuse for me, none! I ought to suffer. Oh, how miserable I am! And, mother, mother, I have made my own misery."

"You go too far, Sappha. You make too much of a few words. All lovers have quarrels, and in my opinion Leonard cannot come back too soon."

"He will not come. He was too quiet. He said too little. He will never come back. Always, we have slighted him a little."

"He has been very well received—do not make excuses for him on that ground. I wish Annette would keep her tongue out of our affairs. She is nothing but a mischief maker."

"I know, but Annette could not have harmed me if I had been true to Leonard. To be ready to doubt him, only on Annette's word, was a shameful wrong, and I deserve to be forsaken and forgotten."

"It is Leonard's fault more than yours. He ought to have stopped that man's tongue at once. Any woman would have become suspicious and irritable. It was a shame for Leonard to put your love for him to such a trial. He will see that as soon as he gets over the little slight. Now dress yourself, dear, and come downstairs. What is the use of nursing sorrow in a darkened room? Sunshine makes grief more bearable. I do believe that Leonard will return with your father."

"I will come down—but Leonard will not return with father."

"You are very provoking, Sapphira. And I can tell you one thing, they that are determined to be miserable will always find the wherewithal for misery. Try and hope for the best," and she kissed her and added, "Put on a fresh white frock, you look best in white."

So Sappha did as she was counselled, but her bravery did not help her to bear her sorrow—a sorrow made worse by its uncertainty in all respects. If Leonard had only granted her a little time, if he had been patient enough to tell her of the morning's events, if he had not given that rose of renunciation! Yes, that act of his was the real provocative of her desertion. He had told her to forget him. What could he expect but a prompt acceptance of his request? It would have been impossible at that stage to have hesitated. He had broken their betrothal, not her; how then could she hope he would make any effort to renew it?

She did not hope for it, though she obeyed her mother's desire, and with an aching heart dressed herself in white and went downstairs. About five o'clock she heard her father's steps, and he was not alone. But the double footsteps did not give her a moment's hope. She knew they were not Leonard's, and in a few moments she saw that St. Ange was her father's companion. They were talking in tones of earnest gratification, and as soon as the ordinary greetings were over resumed their conversation.

The subject was, of course, the duel and the sympathetic response it had evoked in Leonard's favour. Gilson's effort to escape to Boston, his bullying language when detected, the decided white feather he had shown on the field, his cowardice under pain since he had received his punishment, were now the topics of public conversation; and the men who had been foremost in doubting Leonard Murray were now the warmest in his praise. All these things St. Ange described in his usual sparkling detail, and the judge, Mrs. Bloommaert, and Sappha listened to him with the keenest interest.

Suddenly Judge Bloommaert said: "I never heard before of a man disabling his antagonist just in that way. I wonder how Leonard learned the stroke."

"One of Robespierre's emigrants taught it to Leonard. He was a noble of the highest lineage, but when driven to America he embraced the simple life of the wilderness with inconceivable ardour. Leonard met him in the exploring party which he accompanied to the Mississippi, and together they went down the river to New Orleans. Their tedious voyage was relieved with sword play, and under this French noble's tuition Leonard became an incomparable fencer. With this same stroke he disarmed Señor Zavala in New Orleans."

"Ah! Then Murray has fought before?"

"Yes. The duel between Señor Zavala and Mr. Murray is well remembered in New Orleans."

"Suppose, then, you tell us about it," said Mrs. Bloommaert.

"I was not acquainted with Leonard at the time, but Mr. Livingston told me of the circumstance. The Americans in New Orleans are proud of it."

"Why have you never named it before, then?" asked the judge.

"Leonard desired me not to speak of it because he said there was a feeling against the duel in New York, and that you, judge, whose good opinion he specially desired, were opposed to the custom. I think, indeed, that Leonard's reluctance to notice Gilson's slanders arose from a fear of offending you."

"Well, St. Ange, as a general thing I do not approve of the duel; but there are exceptions to every rule, and the exceptions must be condoned. They need not, however, be repeated."

"We are more anxious to hear about Leonard's New

Orleans affair than to discuss the right or wrong of duelling," said Mrs. Bloommaert. And St. Ange smilingly continued:

" The occasion for it lay backward some years, even to that twentieth of December, A. D., 1801, when the tricoloured flag of the French republic was displayed at sunrise in New Orleans for the last time. For at noon that day Governor Claiborne and General Wilkinson, at the head of the American forces, entered New Orleans, and the French Commissioner Laussant gave up the keys of the City Hall to them. Amid tears and profound silence the French flag was hauled down, and the Stars and Stripes took its place.

There were about one hundred and fifty Americans in the city at that time, and they stood together on the corner of the Place d'Arms and cheered it. But no one else showed any approval. The French and Spanish inhabitants could not reconcile themselves to the change; prejudices amounting to superstition made them for a long time attribute everything unpleasant to the American occupation. This bias was carried so far that when, on one occasion, a public ball was interrupted by an earthquake the anger of an old Creole gentleman was roused, and he said passionately, ' It was not in the Spanish or the French times that the amusements of the ladies were interfered with.'

" However, as soon as the cession was complete, northern immigration poured into New Orleans, and when the present war was proclaimed there was no lack of enthusiasm for its prosecution. Still some of the old antagonism remained, and one morning as Leonard was in the Place d'Arms he saw some members of a volunteer regiment deploy there. A boyish American carried the flag in front of them, and Señor Zavala as he passed made a very offensive and contemptuous remark. Leonard stepped out and asked if he intended that remark for the American flag. Zavala answered, 'It is most welcome to it, Señor.' Leonard challenged him there and then. As Zavala was something of a bravo, he looked amused, and, when he saw that Leonard was in earnest, annoyed. For he did not like to fight such a youth; he had the same scruple that influenced Leonard in fighting Gilson; he considered himself so superior in skill to his challenger that an acceptance was very like cruelty, if not also cowardice.

"But Leonard would not retreat, and Zavala declined to make any apology, and the duel took place. A great interest was evinced in this affair, though duels were common enough on every subject, and Leonard had especially the watchful sympathy of every American in the city. They were resolved that at least he should have fair play, and that if he had been wounded there were plenty of men ready to take up his quarrel with Zavala. To the amazement of every one Zavala was disarmed in less than five minutes, and in precisely the same manner as Gilson. But his behaviour was very different. He made no outcry, he knew the code too well to touch his antagonist's sword, and it was with a polite smile he handed his rapier to Leonard and said, 'Señor, my sword is yours. I make my apology to you and to your flag.'"

"I have nothing to say against that duel," said the judge, and Mrs. Bloommaert's face was radiant with sympathy and approval. Sappha's eyes, heavy with unshed tears, were dropped, and she could not speak. Had she tried her very words would have wept.

"Leonard behaved splendidly," continued St. Ange. "With his weapon he withdrew all ill feeling, and during Zavala's convalescence he passed some time with him every day, and supplied him with attentions and luxuries Zavala's own means could not have procured. The conclusion of this story I heard yesterday. Zavala is now enrolled for the defence of the very flag he insulted. Mr. Livingston had the news in a letter, and he recalled the duel to my memory in order to emphasise the result.

"It is rather remarkable," said the judge. "I never heard of this affair before."

"Well, no!" answered Achille. "It was only known by the Livingstons, myself, and Leonard; and none of us thought it well to talk about it here. New York is not New Orleans, where the duel is concerned. To have fought a few successful duels in New Orleans is a social distinction; in New York the result socially is doubtful. You have only to look at Mr. Burr——"

"There is a heavier charge against Mr. Burr than the duel—his country——"

"Pardon me, judge, his country's laws have declared him innocent; can we go behind judge, jury, and the written law?"

At this question Mrs. Bloommaert rose from the table, and Sappha quietly left the room, and did not return to it. Every word uttered by Achille had intensified her grief and made more bitter her repentance. Never before had she understood her lover or rightly valued his affection. Alas, alas, that sorrow should be the clearest of all revelations! Love too often bandages the eyes of the soul, but sorrow rends away all obstructions to vision. At that hour Sappha saw Leonard as she had never before seen him—his unselfishness, his modesty, his patience, the truth and tenderness of his affection, his beauty and graciousness, the living joy that his companionship had been to her. Oh, there was no end to such recollections! and her soul ached in all its senses, for by her own act she had cast ashes on every one of the sweet memories between them.

It was, however, well for her that she could not indulge too much this rapturous pain of memory, for it unfitted her for the world she had to live in; a world empty to her, but thrilling to the highest passions all around her. For none could be indifferent to the fact that peace in Europe meant a far more active war against America. Hitherto, England's hands had been tied by her conflict with Napoleon and all the nations allied with him; now she was at liberty to turn her armaments against America. Yet, though the people of New York were alive to their danger, and not careless in preparing to meet it, they had never been so remarkable for their entertainments and pleasure taking. All the newspapers commented on the fact, pointing out the number of places of amusement open every night, and the constant steamboat excursions every day.

From all these sources of pleasure Sapphira Bloommaert disappeared. It was said she was in ill health, but as every one knew of her engagement to Leonard Murray her seclusion was generally attributed to his absence. For Sappha's premonition had been correct; Leonard did not return to her. She watched despairingly for several days, and then heard that he had left the city. It was the judge's painful duty to give this information to his child, and though he named the circumstance, as it were, casually, he saw and felt the suffering his words caused. Sappha did not speak, but Mrs. Bloommaert said with an angry amazement:

"Gone! Where, then, has he gone to, Gerardus?"

"I know not. No one knows, unless it be lawyer Grahame, or Achille. Grahame will never say a word, nor Achille, until he gets warrant for it."

"But there must be some opinion," continued Mrs. Bloommaert. "Men cannot disappear without leaving at least an opinion."

"Well then, there are several opinions. Some think he has gone to the Niagara frontier, others to Washington, and not a few are sure he is on his way to New Orleans. I myself think New Orleans very likely; he has interests and friends there."

And Sappha listened and ate her bread to this sorrowful news. Only her colourless face revealed her suffering at that moment; but it showed itself in various ways after this certainty had been accepted. One of the most pronounced forms it took was a feeling of intense dislike and anger towards Annette. She would not go to Annette's house, nor would she see her if she called at the Bowling Green house. Her reasons were sufficient to herself, and Mrs. Bloommaert thought her daughter justified in her conduct. Not yet could she ask Sappha to forgive; not while her eyes held that look of pain and despair, and her whole manner that of one standing smitten and dismayed before a barrier she could not cross.

As a matter of course, the unhappy Sappha passed her days "going quietly," almost hopelessly, for there was in her grief that element of tragic fatality, that sense of Fate shaping life by the most trivial things, that renders men and women despairing. Never before had she given sway to a temper so unreasonable, so impetuous, so passionately hasty. And surely not without the co-operation of the stars had Annette called just at that early hour in the morning—Annette, jealous, miserable, ill-tempered, envious, full of suspicions, and delighting in making misery for others as well as herself. Then, unfortunately, Mrs. Bloommaert was ill; and Annette, unrestrained by her presence, while Sappha's sympathies had been called on all night long and her temper unconsciously frayed and irritated by her inability to prevent her mother's suffering. Oh, every trivial thing had been against her, even to the small event of her going to the back parlour after breakfast! For had she remained, as was her usual custom, in front of the house, she would have seen Annette's interview with her father, and been prepared for whatever she might say.

All these considerations gave a sort of fatality to her quarrel with Leonard, but they did not induce any kinder feeling towards Annette. She regarded her, if not as the author, at least as the tool and messenger, of evil; and Annette was quickly made to feel her position. Of course she was angered by it. And Annette was easily made angry at this time, for Achille had never been so provoking and unmanageable. In spite of her complaints, he had lately spent all his days with De Singeron, who was now on the point of sailing for France; and the episode of Leonard's duel had been specially aggravating, because she had not been taken into confidence concerning it. And with that singular obtuseness common to selfish people, she considered Mrs. Bloommaert's coolness and Sappha's constant refusals to see her as a quite uncalled-for show of offence. She told herself she had only repeated what every one was saying, and that if Sappha had any sense of what was proper and respectable she would have been grateful for her candour. "People are always asking to be told the truth," she complained, "and then when you put yourself out of the way to tell it, they are sure to be angry at you."

When three weeks had passed in this uncomfortable manner, Annette began seriously to miss her accustomed sources of that familiar friendship which admits of confidence and some showing of individuality. She awoke one morning with a sense of isolation and of not being properly loved and cared for; that was too intolerable to be endured longer, and taking little Jonaca with her as a kind of peacemaker, she called on her aunt and Sappha. As the carriage drew up at the Bloommaert house she saw Sappha rise, and when she entered the parlour only Mrs. Bloommaert was present.

"Good-morning, aunt Carlita! I have brought Jonaca to see you."

Mrs. Bloommaert kissed the babe, and said she "looked well," and then resumed her sewing.

"Where is Sappha, aunt?"

"She is in her room. She is not well, and I cannot disturb her."

"Oh, indeed, aunt, I saw her as I passed the window. She need not run away from me."

"Has Sappha run away from you? Why has she done that?"

"I suppose because I told her some things about Leonard Murray. It was right for her to know them; but I have no doubt, now that Leonard has run away, she blames me for all his faults."

"Leonard has not run away, and it is very wrong and very spiteful in you to make such remarks."

"Nobody knows where he is, and he has left New York. What do you call that, aunt?"

"I call it minding his own affairs, and as for saying no one knows where he is, that is a lie. Because he did not tell Annette St. Ange where he was going, is that proof that he has told no one? Indeed, Annette, if you can believe it, there are a few people of consequence in New York beside yourself—and Mr. St. Ange."

"Well, then, you need not be angry, aunt. And it is not kind nor yet religious to call what I say 'a lie.' No one ever used such a word to me before."

"You forget. Often I have heard your grandmother say the same thing."

"She was more polite than to say 'a lie'; she might doubt what I told her, though always afterwards she found out I was right."

"Indeed, Annette, you must excuse me from discussing your perfections this morning. I am busy. Sappha is sick."

"I am going upstairs to see her, aunt."

"You are not, Annette. You have hurt her sufficiently. I will not allow you to go and tell her that Leonard has 'run away,' for instance. And I dare say you have plenty of such sharp speeches ready."

"I have not—I have only——"

"If they are not ready, 'tis no matter. They spring up to your thoughts. I ask you to excuse me this morning, for I have many things to attend to."

"Very well. You have hardly noticed little Jonaca, and you have really told me to go away. I think you have behaved in a very rude and unkind manner. You can say to Sappha I am sorry for her. If she will remember I told her often that Leonard Murray was not at all sincere. I don't think he ever loved Sappha well enough to wish to marry her."

"Good-morning, Annette!" And with these words Annette found herself alone. She immediately drove to her grandmother's. She felt sure of appreciation there. And madame was delighted to see her and the child. She took the little one in her arms and held it to her breast with a soft cradling motion that soon put it to sleep, and then she laid it tenderly down among the pillows on the sofa.

"So sweet, so pretty is she!" sighed madame. "I wonder if it is possible that I was ever like to her!"

"Once I too was so sweet! so pretty! so loved and happy! but now—now——"

"Well then, *now,* you are also sweet and pretty and loved and happy."

"Oh, no, I am not, grandmother. Every one is cross with me, every one seems to hate me—except you."

"*Hush! hush!* What you are saying is not true. It is unlucky to put into words such thoughts."

"I have just been at aunt Carlita's, and she hardly noticed Jonaca, and told me she was busy, and I must excuse her."

"Where was Sappha?"

"Aunt says she is sick. She would not let me see her."

"Well, then, Sappha looks ill—I have noticed it."

"She is fretting about Leonard. You know he was really made to fight that duel. I think Achille made him fight it, and now he has run away from New York. I suppose he did not like to meet his acquaintances."

At this point Annette suddenly stopped speaking, being admonished thereto by her grandmother's rising anger. The old lady was regarding her with an expression Annette seldom saw on her face, but which was one she did not care to neglect.

"Have you said all the wickedness in your heart, Annette?" she asked sternly. "You know that false, false, false! are all your words. The truth I had from Achille—the whole truth—and Leonard has not run away; why then should he run away? Your uncle Gerardus tells me that very wisely and very honourably he behaved. Also, I heard from him about the affair in New Orleans. That, then, was a duel to be proud of."

"In New Orleans? What affair in New Orleans, grandmother? I never heard of that."

"Achille can tell you. Ask him."

"He has not told me, and he knows. You see then, how much he trusts me, grandmother. I will not ask him. You tell me, grandmother."

"No, I will not tell you what he has kept from you. Good reasons he may have, of which I know nothing."

"*So!* I begin to find out things! Very good! I shall make Achille tell me."

"Can you make Achille speak if he wishes not to speak? Try it once, and you will be sorry. Annette, Annette, I fear me for your future, if so unreasonable you are!"

"Unreasonable! Grandmother! I assure you I have many good reasons for all I do. Very unhappy I have been lately! Oh, I wish you would pity me a little!"

"Surely Annette St. Ange needs not pity. Come, now, tell me all your troubles,—very small are they,—and in telling they will go away. Achille loves you—is kind to you; Jonaca is well, you are well—what then is the matter?"

"If Achille loves me, he loves far better that pastry cook."

"There it is—'that pastry cook.' You have no good right to use those words, and well you know it. The pastry cook De Singeron is now Count de Singeron, and goes home to take again his place in a court regiment. But *so!* even if he were yet a pastry cook, he is the friend of Achille; he is loved by Achille; by you also he ought to be loved for Achille's sake."

"You always take Achille's part."

"When Achille is right and you are wrong."

"Thank goodness, I have done with the Count de Singeron! He left New York yesterday, and Achille sat up all night and cried about it."

"Have you quarrelled—you and Achille?"

"No one can quarrel with Achille. If I get angry he says only, 'Madame is not well,' or 'Madame needs a little rest,' and then bows and leaves me—perhaps he kisses my hand, and then I feel as if I should like to—— Oh, grandmother, it is terrible! If he would only get angry!"

"My dear one, you know not the anger of such men as Achille. *That* would be terrible indeed! I warn you of it. To rude words or cross words he will never condescend; but—but—the thing he will *do,* if you love him, your heart it will break!"

"He does not talk to me as he should. Here is this New Orleans affair! I am not told of it, and Leonard's duel with Mr. Gilson I knew nothing of till it was over—and so it was really Achille who is to blame for the trouble with Sappha."

"Oh! Oh! The trouble with Sappha! What did you do to Sappha, Annette?"

"Nothing much—it is not worth telling you, grandmother."

"The judge of that I will be myself."

"I do not wish to tell you, grandmother. It is nothing."

"Very good! I will ask Sappha. The truth she will tell me, I know."

"I do not like that Sappha should complain of me to you, grandmother. I will tell you myself. It was the dreadful morning of the duel. When I awoke I found Achille had gone, and I was afraid he would be hurt, and very angry indeed that he should mix himself up in Leonard Murray's disgraceful quarrel. I thought I ought to have been considered. Just think, grandmother, how disagreeable it was likely to be for me—every one of the De Vries coming to talk it over, and all the Cruger women, and Fanny Curtenius, and the Sebrings, Fishers, Ogdens, and all the rest of them. I felt as if I could not bear the shame, and then never to have been consulted about such an affair! It was too bad."

"That was to spare you anxiety. Achille was thoughtful for you."

"No, he was thoughtful for himself. He knew I should not permit him to have anything to do in such a quarrel, and he really ran away from me."

"I advise you, say nothing like that to Achille."

"Well, then, I was angry, very angry, and I thought I would get uncle Gerardus to interfere—or you, grandmother. And uncle was unkind, and told me to go home and not to disturb aunt Carlita, who had, of course, one of her bad headaches."

"Annette! You should not say such a thing."

"Well, it is the truth. Aunt has a headache whenever it is inconvenient for her to have one; and uncle said Sappha had been up all night with her, and I was ordered not to worry Sappha or say anything unpleasant to her. I felt then very, very angry, and I went into the house and when I saw Sappha with her white face and injured manner I could not be quiet. I told her all that I had been told about Leonard, and she was what I call insolent to me, and she will not speak to me now; she goes away if I call there, and aunt Carlita is almost as rude. This morning she hardly noticed poor little innocent Jonaca, and she asked me to excuse her. Sappha went to her room as soon as she saw me coming."

"Now, then, Annette, a family quarrel I will not have. In my family we have all had to bear and forbear, and you must make up friends with Sappha. What, in short, did you say that so offended your cousin? Tell me the worst."

"Well, to be sure, I said people called Leonard a coward and usurer, and that no respectable person would speak to him, and no good girl could be seen with him, and that I, like the others, would have to shut my door against him."

"Thou cruel one! Tell me no more—and all these things thou knew to be lies."

"How could I know? Achille told me nothing."

"Who did tell thee?"

"Alida de Vries, and Fanny Curtenius, and Emma Ogden, and many others."

"And Leonard himself ate with thee on the Sunday previous to the duel, and what he told Achille thou heard. If it seemed true and good to Achille, could thou not also have believed? I am ashamed of thee! Thou hast not one decent excuse. All thou said to Sappha, thou said, knowing in thy cruel heart it was lies."

"Grandmother, it is too bad to put all the blame on me. And I will not now be scolded as if I was a child."

"Then why did thou come here, deceitful one? Did thou think I would bless thee for thy shameless cruelty? Go to thy own home, then."

"Dear grandmother—you will make me ill. I cannot bear you to be angry."

"Well, then, go tell thy cousin thou art sorry."

"Yes, I will, if I can see her. I will do it for your sake, grandmother. I will do anything, if you will forgive me. I was so miserable that morning—if you would tell Sappha I am sorry, then perhaps she will listen to me."

"I will see to that. I want not to have the whole city talking of the quarrel in the Bloommaert family. Our troubles are our own, and our own are our quarrels. To-morrow I will talk to Sappha; and the next day thou must make all right that is wrong. See thou do it."

With this understanding Annette went home, and on the day appointed she visited Sappha. In the interval madame had also visited Sappha, and with the help of her son and daughter-in-law arranged a kind of truce between Annette and the cousin she had injured so seriously. But now, if never before, all three learned the strength of that unbendable will which madame had pointed out as existing in Sappha's nature, when as yet no one had ever seen any evidence of it. Sappha agreed, for the sake of preventing gossip about the Bloommaerts, to speak politely to Annette whenever they met; and also not pointedly to avoid their meeting by disappearing whenever Annette appeared. Beyond this concession she would not move; and when madame proposed a family dinner at Annette's house, Sappha said with a positiveness even her father respected:

"I will not enter Annette's house."

"That is a word that cannot stand, Sappha," answered madame, with an almost equal positiveness.

"It will stand, grandmother," Sappha replied, "until I enter it with Leonard Murray. Annette threatened to shut her door against Leonard. In so doing, she shut it against me. If Leonard should ever return, if he should ever forgive me—he may then forgive the woman who has caused us both so much suffering. If these unlikely things happen, we may go *together* to Annette's. I will never go without him. Never!" And there was such calm invincible determination in every word she uttered that even madame felt it useless to try either reasoning or authority. Indeed, Sappha won in this plain statement of her position the perfect sympathy of her father, and he said:

"I think Sappha is quite right. The stand she has taken is unassailable. We must make the best of what she concedes. If Sappha still regards Leonard as her future husband, she can do no less."

"But, my son——"

"Yes, my mother, I know what you would say, but in this case my daughter is right. I shall stand by my daughter."

Then Sappha went to her father, and he put his arm around her and kissed her, and told her, "he was sure she would do the very best she could, and so he trusted her."

In accordance, therefore, with the promise made, and the obligation implied by her father's confidence, Sappha remained in the parlour when Annette called the next day. She came in her most expansive and effusive mood; kissed her aunt, and then in a kind of mock contrition asked Sappha if she might be permitted to kiss her also?

"I do not deserve a kiss, Sappha, I know I do not; but I am a little sinner to every one, and there is nothing I can do but say 'Annette is sorry.' And really I am sorry. If there is anything I can do, to undo my foolishness——"

"There is nothing, Annette."

"It is too bad. I never dreamed of Leonard taking offence at you; every one was saying unkind things, and I thought you ought to know. I was really very miserable that morning. I hardly knew what I was saying. But the idea of Leonard going away from all his friends—and you!—that never occurred to me."

"We will not speak of Mr. Murray. There are other things to talk of."

"Indeed yes. Have you heard that Mary Sebring is going to Washington? Many people say, because Captain Ellis is there."

"How is Jonaca? Why did you not bring her?"

"I left her with grandmother. She is well enough."

This strained social intercourse was soon invaded by news of menacing national importance. The British fleet was being constantly increased, the blockade very strictly enforced, and the real conflict felt to be near at hand. The entire populace was now divided into two great parties; one was for war, the other for peace; and the fear of disunion of the States hung heavy over all.

On the Fourth of July the President had made a call for 93,500 militia; and before the middle of the month alarm for the safety of New York was so great that the men exempt from military duty formed themselves into companies to aid in its defence. On the third of August Mayor Clinton, in an address to the people, said:

"This city is in danger! We are threatened with invasion. It is the duty of all good citizens to prepare for the crisis. Let there be but one voice among us. Let every arm be raised to defend our country; our country demands our aid. She expects that every free man will be found at his post in the hour of danger, and that every free citizen of New York will do his duty."

This appeal was answered with a prompt and stirring enthusiasm. Volunteer associations pressed forward without regard to party or situation in life. The ground of self-defence was a common ground, and rich and poor worked together on the same works, intermingling their labours with patriotic emulation. The Bowling Green and Brooklyn Heights were like military camps; indeed, the whole city was one great company enrolled to save New York, or perish with it. On the twenty-sixth day of August the *Evening Post* announced the taking of Washington and the flight of the President, and the wildest excitement prevailed; and on the following morning, the press unanimously called:

TO ARMS! CITIZENS, TO ARMS!

YOUR CAPITAL IS TAKEN! PREPARE TO DEFEND OUR CITY TO THE LAST EXTREMITY! THIS IS NO TIME TO TALK! WE MUST ACT AND ACT WITH VIGOUR, OR WE ARE LOST!

In the meantime the government had revised its instructions to the envoys for peace. The rights stipulated for in 1813 and 1814 they were told to abandon; and "*if necessary waive every point for which the war was commenced.*" Nothing could more urgently describe the urgent necessity of the country, which, indeed, was financially and commercially on the brink of ruin. Her harbours were blockaded; communications coastwise between all ports cut off; ships rotting in every creek and cove where they could find security, and the immense annual products of the country mouldering in warehouses. The sources of profitable labour were dried up, and the currency considered as irredeemable paper. Nor were these things the worst features of the situation. A still more dangerous symptom of the national emergency was the hostility of certain portions of the Union. Secession in some States was a proposition not unlikely to become a fact; while the credit of the government was exhausted, and the war apparently as far from a close as ever it had been.

The winter also was very severe, the Hudson frozen across to Jersey City, and the Sound frozen across from the mainland to Sands Point. There was much poverty and suffering, and a great gloom and depression owing to the apparent failure of the Peace Commissioners at Ghent to effect any reasonable agreement. Yet among the military social entertainments were frequent, and the people prominent in New York social life still kept up the pretence of fashion, and gave dinners, balls, and theatre parties, which had a kind of half-hearted semblance of gaiety.

Sapphira Bloommaert availed herself of the reasonable excuse which public calamity gave her to retire from everything society called " pleasure " ; therefore her absence from Annette's entertainments escaped the unpleasant notice it would otherwise have received. Annette was able to parry all inquiries on two grounds: first, on Sappha's national sympathy; or, if this reason was incredulously received, mysteriously to associate Mr. Murray's name with that of his country. " Sappha was so sensitive; her country was in distress, and then also, her lover was in danger. Yes, Mr. Murray had joined General Jackson at New Orleans, and every one knew what a reckless soldier General Jackson was. Of course Sappha was not in a dancing mood.

She could understand. For if Mr. St. Ange was with General Jackson, she would be incapable of seeing any one, even her dearest friends."

People thought with her, or not with her, Annette cared little. They had been given reasons for Sappha's absence from social affairs, and they could not, to her face, go beyond them. But Achille was not to be so easily put off. He himself had taken to the judge the information that Leonard was with General Jackson; and after this honourable certainty of her lover's position he saw no reason for Sappha's seclusion.

"Why does Sappha decline all our invitations, Annette?" he asked one night, after a rather disappointing dance. "We do miss her so much."

"I endure her absence very comfortably," replied Annette. "Sappha has been ill-natured with me ever since—— Oh, for a long time. How do you like Miss Bogardus?"

"Very well, she accommodates herself perfectly; but why is Sappha at disagreement with you? It is a pity. Our parties do not succeed without her. She is so lovely, so enchanting in her grace and kindness."

"Well, then, you may accustom yourself to do without her beauty, and enchantments, and grace, and kindness. She will never enter this house again! There now! I know it! and I am not broken-hearted, Achille."

"Madame is what she calls joking?"

Achille asked this question in a cold, even voice, but if

Annette had been a wise woman she would have regarded the look in his eyes and the stern set of his lips as ominous and implacable. On the contrary, she defied them, being roused to that attitude by a number of little annoyances, of which this inquiry concerning Sappha was the culmination. She flung down the bracelet she had been unclasping in a temper, and answered:

"One does not joke about Sapphira Bloommaert. No, indeed! A girl that cannot understand a little mistake—a mere slip of the tongue."

"You astonish me, Annette," answered Achille. "I have always considered your cousin as most amiable—most easy to persuade. What slip, what mistake, did you make?"

"I do not care to talk about Sappha any longer. I am weary."

"Then madame must sleep and rest. I can myself ask Sappha; perhaps I may rectify the little mistake—the slip——"

"Oh, Achille, do let the subject drop!"

"It interests, it excites me. There is a wrong; that is unfortunate. I may put it right. When did the little mistake occur?"

Then Annette perceived that she must tell the story herself or have the whole subject reopened. The latter course, with her uncle, aunt, and grandmother all opposed to her, was not to be endured. She was undressing her hair, and she turned round and faced Achille with its pale beauty streaming over her shoulders and emphasising the living whiteness of her face and throat; and Achille experienced again that singular sense of repulsion and fascination she had first inspired in his heart; for she looked more like some angry elfin creature than a mere mortal woman.

"Achille," she said, "it will give me pleasure to tell you how I offended my cousin, who is lovely, so enchanting in her grace and kindness. You remember the morning that you had to attend to Leonard Murray's duel? Very well, you went away without considering me. I was forced to get up, order the carriage, and ride as fast as possible to see my uncle."

"What for? What reason? None whatever."

"I wanted uncle Gerardus to find you—to stop you——"

"You followed me—you sent your uncle to follow me. I surely do not understand!"

"Uncle would have nothing to do with the affair, and he treated me rudely."

"Rudely? I must see about that."

"Good gracious, Achille! I mean unkindly. He would not interfere, and he told me not to trouble Sappha—and I was afraid for you."

"*Mon Dieu,* Annette! Afraid for me!"

"And the very sight of Sappha was more than I could bear. All this trouble for me because of her cowardly lover, and so I told her what every one was calling Leonard. You know very well what that was. And she got angry, and that made me say a thing I was sorry for afterwards; and I told her that I was sorry, and she made believe to forgive me, but Sappha does not forgive right; and not even grandmother or uncle Gerardus can make her."

"What thing was it you said?"

"I said every respectable person would shut their doors against Leonard Murray, and that I supposed I should have to shut my doors; and so now she will not come here. She says she never will come, unless Leonard comes with her."

"Madame reminds me. This truly is madame's house, and madame has the right to shut her doors against any one she wishes to affront. I must protect my friend, I must ask him to a house whose doors stand open for him. To-morrow I shall conclude the purchase of the Mowatt place, and we shall remove to it. I know not what day Mr. Murray may return, and the possibility of his being turned away from madame's house fills me with anxiety."

"Oh, Achille! Achille! We cannot leave this house. Grandfather de Vries only gave it to me on condition we lived in it. We shall lose the place, and it is valuable property. Oh, Achille!"

"Madame must understand that I would rather lose the property than lose my friend."

From this position Achille would not retire, and Annette's friends would not interfere. Madame said "she had no control over Annette's finances, and that it was De Vries' way to keep a string tied to every dollar not entirely under his own hand. And when Annette grew sentimental over the place, as " one of her wedding gifts " and " her bride home," madame said:

" Full of memories it was, before you were born, Annette, and they are not all pleasant ones. At the cost of your purse, your tongue has talked; I hope, then, you will remember the lesson you pay dearly for." Mrs. Bloommaert thought the Mowatt house would be healthier for Jonaca. It was high and sunny, and she advised her niece to accept it cheerfully on that ground. But the judge administered the most consoling opinion, for he laughed at Annette's fears and said, " Batavius de Vries was *non compos mentis* and incapable of making any change in his will that would stand." This assurance set Annette firmly on her feet. She accepted the inevitable as if it was precisely the thing she had been longing for. And though Achille was astonished at her charming complaisance and co-operation, he admired her tact, and rewarded it by adorning and furnishing her rooms in the delicate blues she affected.

The news of this change of residence caused far less surprise and talk than Annette had anticipated. No one seemed to consider it of much importance, and the reasons and excuses for her removal which Annette had prepared were hardly called for. Indeed, most people had interests of their own to employ all their speculation, for the winter was the most hopeless one New York had suffered since the commencement of the war. Many, like Sapphira Bloommaert, refused all invitations to parties of pleasure; some on patriotic grounds, many more because the financial pressure of the times forbade extravagance of every kind. And as if to sanction and strengthen this retirement, the President urged the keeping of the twelfth day of January, 1815, as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayers for peace. The bitter cold, the deep snows, the scarcity of all necessaries of life, the silence and suspense enforced by the winter, affected the most careless; and there was an oppressive feeling and a longing for peace that could not be thrown off.

The reviving stir under this national nightmare did not occur until the evening of February the eleventh. Sappha was reading to her father the travels of Mungo Park, and they were much interested in them. Even Mrs. Bloommaert had let her work fall to her lap, and was listening with moist eyes to Park's despair in the desert and his restoration to hope and life by the sight of a little wild flower in the desolate place. Suddenly a chorus of exulting shouts filled the Bowling Green. The judge leaped to his feet.

"*It is peace!*" he cried. "Open the windows! Let us hear! Let us see!" And at that moment every window on the Bowling Green was thrown open. Men were pouring from the houses into the street, as a deep harmonius anthem came rolling down Broadway, into the Bowling Green, an anthem of one glad note—"*Peace! Peace! Peace!*"

Regardless of all warnings and entreaties, the judge went out. "The news will keep me warm," he said; and as he hastily buttoned up his long coat he looked twenty years younger. "You need not be anxious about father to-night," said Sappha to her mother. "He will take no harm, and, oh, how I wish I could go with him!"

By this time every house in the neighbourhood was illuminated and open; the women in them calling and waving to each other. The forts were bellowing the news up and down the river; and for four hours thousands of men and women were constantly passing through the Bowling Green carrying torches and crying with jubilant voices the same glad word, "*Peace! Peace! Peace!*" And above all this joyful hubbub the bells of Trinity rang clear and strong, echoing between earth and heaven the same exulting song.

Not until after midnight did the judge return home. He had been a sick man for a week. He was then quite well, full of hope, almost drunk with enthusiasm. Hot coffee was waiting for him, but he called for meat, and insisted on having it. "The doctor has nothing to do with my case to-night," he said. "I know what I want, Carlita. I am hungry. I have spent ten years of life the past four hours. Glad of it—well spent are they! Give me meat and bread. Oh, then, I will take coffee, but it ought to be wine—the best wine in the world is not enough."

He was throwing off his coat as he spoke, and he then went to the roaring fire and spread out his wet feet to its warmth. His wife looked with terror at their condition.

"I did not know they were wet, Carlita," he said. "I never thought of my feet. Kouba, take off my shoes and stockings and get dry ones. My feet were too happy to be sick; they never gave me one twinge! Why, Carlita, I have walked miles to-night, and I am not tired."

"And you are so hoarse that you can scarcely whisper, Gerardus."

"Am I? Then I must have been shouting with the rest. I did not know it. Never mind, the news is worth the shout. Now my feet are dry and warm, give me my coffee, and something to eat; and I will talk to you—if I can."

"Did you see anything of Peter?"

"I met him. He had been to mother's, and he was coming for me."

"How did Peter hear so quickly?"

"He was sitting in the office of *The Gazette* in Hanover Square. Peter goes there often in the evenings. It is a great place of resort for the men of that quarter; but being Saturday night no one was there but Mr. Lang and Alderman Cebra; and they were just going to shut up the office when a pilot rushed in. He stood for a moment breathless and speechless, and while they wondered he gasped out, '*Peace! the boat is here with the treaty!*' In a minute, Peter says, every one rushed into the Square shouting *Peace!* and every window was thrown up, and every one in the surrounding houses was on the street. And immediately the cry was heard from all quarters of the city.

The news spread like wildfire. No one could say how it happened, but in less than one hour every waking soul in New York knew it. Houses were all illuminated, and I wonder if there was any one left in them, for the streets were crowded with men and women both; and none thought of the cold, and no one knew that it was snowing."

"And now you can hardly speak, Gerardus."

"I have been shouting, though I did not know that I opened my lips. Such a song of gladness I shall never hear again, Carlita, in this world. I am glad I lost my voice in it."

"Well and good; but what did the Democrats say? Did they——"

"We were all Democrats, and we were all Federalists to-night. Men that have not spoken to each other for four years shook hands to-night. Strangers were friends to-night. There were no rich and no poor to-night. We were all citizens of New York to-night. We were all brothers. Carlita, Sappha, I would not have missed to-night for anything in the world."

"I am afraid you will have to suffer for it, Gerardus."

"I do not believe it. I never felt better in all my life. Why, here comes Mr. Goodrich!" And with these words a bright, exulting gentleman walked into the room.

"Your door stood open, judge," he said, "and I did not know you were able to be out, so I thought I would call and rejoice a while with you."

"I have been on the street for four hours, Mr. Goodrich; four of the happiest hours of my life. You know about that?"

"Thank God, I do! I went last night to Miss Dellinger's concert and ball at the City Hotel. She was singing *The Death of Lawrence* when I heard a strange murmur, and then a wild shout on the street. The next moment the door of the concert hall was thrown open and a man, breathless with excitement, rushed in crying '*Peace! Peace!* An English sloop-of-war is here with the treaty.' The music instantly ceased, and the hall was empty in a few minutes. No one thought of the song, no one remembered the ball. We all, men and women, rushed into the street. Broadway was a living tide of happy, shouting human beings. Many were bare-headed, and did not know it. No one cared for the cold. They were white with snow, and quite indifferent to the fact."

"I saw them! I was among them! I must have been shouting too, but I was not aware of it at the time. Have you heard from any one what terms we have got? Will you believe that I have not thought of 'terms' until this moment?"

"Nor have I, judge. I have heard no one ask about the terms. No one cares about terms just yet. We have *peace!* That is enough!"

CHAPTER
TEN

The Star of Peace

THE one idea of New York, now that peace was assured, was renovation and reconstruction. Every one was busy. The war was a dead issue, commerce was a living one. The passion for trading and building took the place of the military passion, and the happy sounds of labour and traffic superseded those of the cannon and the drum.

The preservation of the city had been for four years the dominant care of its inhabitants; now that it was safe they turned with a vehement spirit of industry to building up trade and commerce in every direction. It was under these auspices a joyful city. There was less dancing and dining, but there was a growing prosperity and content, for all had some business or handicraft to pursue, and all were full of hope and energy.

And the spirit of reconstruction was as potent in women as in men, though their arena for its exercise was more restricted. Mrs. Bloommaert began at once to talk of new carpets and curtains, and of a complete refurnishing of the principal rooms of the house. And as the spring came on every dwelling on the Bowling Green caught this fever of improvement; and first one and then another displayed to passers-by their fresh paint and their new lace draperies. It was a sign of some consequence, for it typified the strength of that hope and energy which embraced domestic comforts and elegancies as part and parcel of their civic prosperity.

In all the changes made in the Bloommaert house Sappha felt, or at least affected to feel, a sufficient interest. She could not shadow her mother's busy pleasure by any evident want of sympathy, yet it was sometimes difficult to forget sufficiently her offended lover. Her soul—that strange, fluttering mystery—had lost its life's dominant, the other soul to which it had learned to refer every thought and desire; and there was now silence or discord where once there had been sweetest melody. Her suffering, however, was no longer a storm, it was rather a still, hopeless rain, an unimpassioned grief that seldom found the natural outlet of tears. But these constant fires of repression and self-immolation were sacramental as well as sacrificial. They were strong with absolution also; and thus made calm and sure by much sorrow and by one love, she gradually came out of trouble with a spirit tempered as by fire; having lost nothing in the furnace but the dross of her nobler qualities.

She rarely heard of Leonard. She knew that he was in New Orleans, and attached to the staff of General Jackson; and so, in the final struggle, doing his duty to his country. But she never forgot the fact that he ought to have been in his native city. "It is my fault, all my fault.

No wonder Leonard cannot forgive me," she said when Mrs. Bloommaert blamed his absence during the darkest days New York had known.

The news of the victory at New Orleans followed closely on the news of peace. It was brought to the Bloommaert household by Achille, who received it with a letter from Mr. Edward Livingston. "Our friend Leonard Murray was wounded in the right arm," he added; "rather a bad sword cut, but he is with the Livingstons, and has every possible care and attention."

Annette came in later, and, unaware of her husband's visit, made a great deal more of Leonard's wound than Achille had done. She "hoped it would not be necessary to resort to amputation—a right arm was so convenient, not to say necessary. And he got it just for interfering," she continued. "An English officer had struck down a man carrying the flag, and Leonard caught the flag as it was falling, and then of course the Englishman fell upon Leonard. Leonard always was so interfering—I mean so ready to do every one's duty for them. You see it was not his place to take care of the flag; so he got hurt taking care of it. Grandfather de Vries always told me never to volunteer, and never to interfere. If a person does his own work and duty in this world, it is all that can be expected of him. Poor Leonard!"

"Oh!" said Sappha, "I think you may keep your pity, Annette, for these poor creatures who never volunteer and never interfere. Suppose every one had followed your grandfather's advice, where would America be now?"

"I do not know. It is not my place to look after America," answered Annette.

"I will tell you then—it would be under the feet of England."

"Grandfather de Vries often says there were very good times when the English were here——"

"Come, come, Annette," interrupted Mrs. Bloommaert, "you are only talking nonsense. When do you move into your new house?"

"Next month. Achille is delightfully considerate. All my rooms are furnished in blue, because he thinks blue so becoming to me; and he takes my advice entirely about the rest. We shall have the most elegant dwelling in the city; and I am glad this dreadful war is over. Now I can get the carpets I desire."

"Did Mrs. Livingston say anything about the condition of New Orleans?" asked Mrs. Bloommaert.

"I did not read her letter. Achille desired me to do so, but I have honour. I would not read Mrs. Livingston's letter. I do not see why she should write to my husband. I do not write to Mr. Livingston."

"She is an old friend of Achille's. Mr. Livingston is much too busy to write letters. Perhaps she thought Leonard Murray had friends in New York who would be glad to hear that he was well cared for."

"Do you believe that Leonard Murray yet remembers us? I do not. We were all so kind to the young man, and Achille stood by him when no one else would. Oh, you need not leave the room, Sappha! I was just going to praise Leonard a little."

But Sappha did leave the room, and Mrs. Bloommaert said with some temper:

"You have done mischief enough, Annette; why can you not let Leonard alone? You are too unkind to Sappha."

"Oh, then, aunt, I think it is Sappha who is truly cruel to me. Because she will not come to our house, I shall have to remove to that ugly Mowatt place. I hate it. All the pretty furniture in the world will not make it endurable; and if Sappha will not visit us there, I know not what Achille will say or do. To be driven from house to house for Sappha's temper is not a pleasant or a reasonable thing."

"Before Sappha's temper, there was your own temper, Annette; and I am sure you need not expect Sappha to visit you in your new home unless you also expect Leonard."

"I suppose I shall have to write to Leonard, and tell him the trouble I am in. I think he would come back and get Sappha to forgive me properly, if I ask him. He was always very fond of me."

"If you write to Leonard Murray one word about Saphira Bloommaert I will never speak to you again, Annette. You may depend upon that! How can you be so malicious?"

"Malicious! You will misunderstand me, aunt Carlita. I thought perhaps if I wrote and told Leonard how angry Sappha was, and how Achille had nearly quarrelled with me about Sappha, he might come back to New York. And I am sure any one can see that Sappha is breaking her heart about his desertion of her."

"Sappha is doing nothing of the kind. Sappha is perfectly happy."

"Oh, I am so glad to hear it! Sappha is perfectly happy! Why did she go away? I really meant nothing unkind. If she had only remained, I was going to tell her about Aglae Davezac, Mrs. Livingston's lovely sister. I dare say she consoles Leonard very well. She is not handsome, but she has a beautiful figure, and is very witty."

"Annette, if you will believe me, we are neither of us interested in either Mrs. Livingston or her lovely sister. There are things nearer home. When did you call on your grandmother? She was complaining of your neglect lately."

"I am just going to see her."

"I hope you will tell her exactly what you have said here."

"No, we shall talk about Jonaca and the new house. Good-morning, aunt!"

Annette's visits had fallen into this kind of veiled unfriendliness. She would have ceased coming to the Bowling Green at all if Achille's pointed inquiries had not forced her into a semblance of civility, for she blamed Sappha, not only for her removal to the Mowatt house, but also for many a passage of words between Achille and herself that were less agreeable than they ought to have been, or would have been if Sappha had not formed the subject of discussion. And from Annette's point of view, perhaps there was cause for some irritation. For a few hasty words which Sappha refused to ignore, there had been many hasty ones between herself and Achille; and, moreover, she did not feel the Mowatt house any equivalent for the roomy, aristocratic dwelling she had been compelled to abandon. Every annoyance that came up regarding this removal she blamed Sappha for; and though she affected to be pleased with the change, it had not only been a bitter mortification to her, but also brought other unpleasant consequences in its train. For it had been just the very kind of thing necessary to rouse Achille to a sense of small household tyranny that he had tolerated because he preferred toleration to assertion. But having once affirmed and exerted his right he had not again relinquished the authority of master.

"I submitted too easily," said Annette, when discussing the subject with her grandmother; "and now Achille just says 'madame will do this,' or 'madame will go there,' or 'madame will say so-and-so,' and I seem to have no power to say madame will not. Oh, grandmother, just for a few words! It is too much punishment! I was so happy, and now I am not happy at all. I sometimes wish that I could die."

"Annette, my dear one, thou must not make more of trouble than there is. Often I have told thee not to complain; after complaint there is no oblivion. If Achille can be polite, cannot thou be silent? With silence, one may plague the devil; but as for spoken words, no sponge wipes them out."

Thus and so events were progressing, as the spring of 1815 waxed to June and roses again. There was at this time some probability that the judge might be requested to go to England as legal adviser to agents sent by the government to arrange some question of boundary not very clearly stated; and if so, he proposed to take his wife and daughter with him.

Sappha heard of this arrangement with dismay, and it was hard for her to enter into her mother's little flurry of anticipation. She did not wish to leave New York at all, for she felt certain that Leonard would return as soon as he was able, if only to look after his large interests in property and real estate. For in the short time intervening between the advent of peace and the advent of summer the whole aspect of New York had been changed. Stores and warehouses long closed were open, houses of all kinds had found ready tenants, the streets were crowded with vehicles, the shipyards literally alive, and vessels coming and going constantly from and to every quarter of the globe. There was not a branch of industry nor a corner of the city where New York's citizens were not proving their liberal views, their broad intelligence, and their energetic activity. How could Leonard Murray stay away from his own city when it was offering him such advantages for new investments and such excellent opportunities for those he already possessed?

She did not include herself among the reasons for his return. She had no hope that she could influence it in any way. If Leonard had not quite forgotten her, he had at least resolved not to renew their acquaintance in any degree. If this were not the case, he would have written to her, sent her some message, some token, if it were only a flower. And at this point she always felt anew the pang of despair; for Leonard would never give her another flower. She had no reason to expect it, she did not deserve it. Here reflection stopped. It could go no further, the memory of that scattered rose was a barrier that no love could put aside or win over.

She made one effort to remain at home; she went to her grandmother and entreated that she would interfere for her. " If you desired me to stay with you, dear grandmother," she said, " my father would permit it; I am sure he would."

" So then, dear one, I must not ask him. Thy mother, what of her? Very much disappointed she would be. To see the wonderful sights of London alone, what pleasure would she find in that? And the shopping, and the visiting without thee, would not be the same. Oh, no, it is in thy delight the good mother will find delight; and in the admiration thou wilt receive will be her honour. Very much alone she will be without thee, for, as to thy father, the affairs of his commission will occupy him. Shall I tell thee thy duty? It is to put away all regret from thy thoughts; to give thyself to the honour and pleasure of thy good parents; to add thy smiles, thy hopes, thy glad young spirits to theirs. This is a great honour for thy father, a great pleasure for thy mother, and if Sapphira Bloommaert I know, I think she will not make it less. No, she will smile, and then ten times greater it will be."

And at these words Sappha smiled, and promised to go willingly and do all she could to increase the joy of those with her.

"And that will not only be right, but wise," answered the old lady; "for in the way of duty it is that we meet blessing and happiness."

From this interview Sappha went home determined to lift cheerfully the burden in her way; and lo! it became lighter than a grasshopper. She found that as soon as she put herself out of consideration she caught the spirit of the change; she became interested in all the details of their journey, and finally almost enthusiastic. Then her father's pride and happy anticipations were hers, as were also her mother's manifold little plans for her own desires and her promises for the desires of others. They lingered over their meals, and they sat hours later at night, talking about the places they were to visit, the people they were to see, and the beautiful things they were to purchase. They had long lists of china, and silk, and lace, to which they were constantly adding; for all their relatives and friends and acquaintances had commissions for them to fill.

In these busy, happy days Sappha won back all the gladsomeness she had lost. She put Leonard, with a loving thought, into the background of her hopes. She gave herself without one grudging thought to the joy set before her. And with this happy spirit came back the radiancy of her beauty; her step regained its elasticity, her cheeks their brilliant colour, her eyes their tender glow, her smiles their love-making persuasion. And every one but madame said it was because she was going to Europe and expected to be presented at Court. Even the judge smiled a little sarcastically, and said to himself, " Leonard Murray has been forgotten." Mrs. Bloommaert did not err quite so far; but realising the charm of all the new expectations before her, she gave them the credit of changing Sappha's dejection to cheerfulness. It was only madame who knew the secret of the happy transition; she understood how the noblest feelings had crushed down the selfish ones and restored the almost despairing girl, by showing her life with a larger horizon than her own personality.

So affairs went on in the Bowling Green house until only ten days remained for the last preparations. And these days were expected to be full of visits and farewell hospitalities; for a voyage to Europe was at that time an undertaking surrounded by uncertainty, and even danger, and people went to the Bloommaerts to bid them good-bye, and then as they spoke of the subject shook doubtful heads and wondered if they would ever see them again.

One day about a week before they were to leave Sappha put on her hat to go to Nassau Street. There had been many callers, and she was excited and a little weary, but Mrs. Bloommaert was still more so; and Sappha entreated her to try and sleep until she returned. Having darkened the room she went away, a little depressed by the shutting out of the sunlight, the uncovered stairway, and general air of the dismantled home. But she was so beautiful that any one might have wondered what mystic elements had been combined to produce that air of pleased serenity and thoughtful happiness which gave to her youth and loveliness a charm that mere form and colour could not impart. She was thinking of Leonard. As she went slowly from step to step she was thinking of Leonard. That day Mrs. Livingston had called, and she had talked enthusiastically about him, of his bravery in action, and his cheerfulness when suffering; and, moreover, of his return to New York. "His wound had been worse than at first appeared likely," she said, "but her sister-in-law believed he would be able to leave New Orleans before the yellow fever season. A thing very desirable," she added, "for there are fears of a severe epidemic this year."

"But Mr. Murray will come north before the danger?" asked Mrs. Bloommaert.

"I am sure he will; next month early, I should say."

Sappha was thinking of this promise, and telling herself that she would persuade her grandmother to see Leonard and say for her all she would say, if present. She had supreme confidence in her love and wisdom, and believed that if ever Leonard could be reconciled, it might well be by Madame Bloommaert's representations. She did not trust Annette, but her grandmother could not fail! and it was the light of these words "*could not fail!*" that gave such singular radiance and serenity to her face and manner.

She looked into the parlour to see if her father had returned home, and then opened the front door. As she did so an eager, tender voice said "*Sappha! Sappha!*" and at the same moment she cried out, "*Leonard! Leonard!*" The four words blended as one voice; and as they did so their hands clasped, their lips met, and the two that had been so miserably two, were now one again.

They went into the parlour and sat down, hardly able to speak—too happy to speak—too sure of each other to want explanations, even to bear them, throwing the wretched episode of the quarrel behind them, caring only for a future in which they might never more miss each other for a moment. Pale with suffering and confinement, Leonard had just that air of pathos which takes a woman's heart by storm; and Sappha felt that she had never until that moment known how dear he was to her.

Mentally she asked herself what was now to be done.

She felt that the journey to England had become an impossible thing. She could not leave Leonard. She could not even speak of the coming separation. For a little while she wished the felicity of their reunion to be shadeless, cloudless, saddened by no yesterday, fearing no to-morrow. Just one hour of such love could sweeten life, why invade it with any careful thought?

All too soon the careful thought came. Leonard had heard of the intended voyage, and it had filled him with such anxiety that against all advices and persuasions he had hastened his return to New York. He was resolved that Sappha should remain with him, or else that he should go with Sappha. In either case, immediate marriage was advisable, and Sappha had now no desire to oppose his wishes.

"We can be married to-morrow, the next day, the day we leave. What is to prevent it?" he asked. She laid her hand in his for answer, and at that moment the judge entered. And as Judge Bloommaert was a man who never required two lessons on any subject, he met Leonard with great kindness and sympathy; and when the subject of an immediate marriage was named made no objections to its consideration "as soon as Mrs. Bloommaert was present."

Then Sappha went swiftly to her mother. She knelt down by the bedside and laid her head on her mother's breast. "Father is home," she whispered, "and Leonard! Oh, mother, mother! Leonard has come back to me! and he wants to go with us to England—and he wants to be married before we go. Mother, dear, sweet mother! you will agree with Leonard? Yes, you will! Yes, you will—for my sake, mother."

"Are you dreaming, Sappha? How can Leonard be here? Mrs. Livingston said a few hours ago that he was in New Orleans."

"But he left New Orleans the same day that her letter left. He could not stay in New Orleans when he heard we were going to England. He has travelled night and day, and he is still pale with suffering. You will be sorry only to see how pale he is. We cannot be parted again; he says it will kill him—and father says we may be married if you are willing. You are willing, mother? Yes, I know you are. Say yes, dear mother, say yes, for Sappha's sake."

"I will dress and see Leonard as soon as possible, Sappha. And if your father is willing for you to marry at once, of course I shall agree with him. But have you considered? We sail in six days. You have no wedding dress. The house is all topsy-turvy. Not a room we can set a table in—carpets up, curtains down, glass and silver all packed away."

"Mother, none of these things are at all necessary. It is Leonard, and not carpets and glass and silver; and——"

"Yes, yes! I know! But you must have a decent gown; a new gown, an old one is unlucky."

"Well, then, it can be made in two or three days—we have six days, you know. Come and see Leonard. I am sure you will see how sensible he is."

Mrs. Bloommaert smiled, rose quickly and began to dress. "Go now and look after tea. Make things as nice as you can. I will be downstairs in half an hour.'

"And then you will stand by Leonard?"

"He has not stood very well by you the last year."

"Please do not name that—do not think of it. I have always told you it was my fault."

"It tosses all my plans upside down, Sappha. I expected to have you with me in all my pleasures. I shall have to wander about London alone, and I shall have no lovely daughter to introduce. Oh, 'tis a great disappointment to me!"

"We shall be together, mother. It will be all the same, and you will have Leonard also."

"My dear, Leonard will want you all the time. I know. He will grudge for any one to breathe the air of the same room with you—but if you are happy, father and I must be content without you."

"It will not be like that, mother. You will see."

"Yes, fathers and mothers all *see*. Suppose now you go and tell the women in the kitchen to get us something to eat. We shall all be more amiable if we have the teacups before us."

The discussion, however, was amiable enough. Judge Bloommaert had not watched his daughter for a year without coming to a very clear diagnosis of the conditions that alone would give her happiness; and he had plenty of that wisdom which knows the art of turning the inevitable into the thing most desirable. The hour had come. Sappha had waited with a beautiful patience for it; he was resolved to give her its joy, fully and freely, and without any hold-back.

"Carlita," he said, as soon as mutual greetings were over, "Carlita, Leonard wishes to marry Sappha at once, and go with us to England. I think it is a good plan. What say you?"

"I think with you always, Gerardus."

"Such hurry will only admit of a very simple wedding ceremony, but Leonard says that is what Sappha and he prefer; and as it is their marriage, they have a right of choice. Eh, Leonard?"

"As you say, sir. Mr. and Mrs. Livingston will represent my friends, and if Sappha's nearest relatives are witnesses the company will be of the proper size. Why should we ask half of New York to gaze at the most sacred and private of all domestic events?"

"Well, then, we will let it be so. Can you arrange for such a wedding, Carlita—say on the morning of the day we leave?"

"I can do my best, Gerardus."

"The packet sails at two o'clock in the afternoon. I suppose the marriage could take place at twelve."

"Better say at ten o'clock, Gerardus. We shall need time to change our dresses and pack up the last things."

"True. Then, Leonard, we will say ten o'clock next Wednesday. Is that right?"

"If Sappha and Mrs. Bloommaert say so. I suppose it cannot be Saturday or Monday?"

"Impossible," answered Mrs. Bloommaert. "There is a wedding dress to make."

"Sappha has plenty of pretty dresses."

"She has not, however, a wedding dress. She cannot be married without one."

"Then perhaps it ought to be bought to-night. There is plenty of time yet."

"In the morning will do."

"If it should not be ready——"

"I will attend to that," said Mrs. Bloommaert, and her manner was not only confident, but final on the subject.

"I must go out for an hour after tea, but when I return we can talk over a few business points," said the judge to Leonard; and the young man was so elated and happy he only smiled; he could say neither yes nor no; everything had slipped from his consciousness but the joy of being near Sappha, of seeing her face, of hearing her speak, and feeling the clasp of her hand within his own.

Then when the judge had gone Mrs. Bloommaert said to Sappha: "I have a letter to write to your grandmother; a very important letter, and I shall have to pick my thoughts, and choose my words, and that is a thing I cannot do if you and Leonard are whispering behind me. Go into the other parlour, and make your little arrangements there."

Very willingly they obeyed, and the sight of the piano was enough to raise the spirit of melody in Leonard's heart. "Let us sing one song together, dearest," he said, and Sappha found the key of the locked instrument, while Leonard searched among the piled music sheets for some song fit for the happy hour.

"Love's Maytime," he cried. "That sounds well." And he stooped and kissed her as she seated herself. Their heads bent toward each other, they were radiant with the most transporting love and their hearts ravished with the bliss of their reunion.

"Sing, my love, and sadden me into deeper joy," whispered Leonard; and soft and low to the simple melody Sappha sang:

"We two will see the springtime still
  In days with autumn rife;
When wintry winds blow bleak and chill
  And we near the bourne of life.

"For love is ever young and kind,
  And love will with us stay
Till we in Life's December find
  A path of endless May."
—*Louis Ledoux.*

Leonard caught the melody quickly, and Mrs. Bloommaert stopped her writing to listen. "Their voices are like one," she thought. "They are happy, they may be more so, but 'a path of endless May' is asking a great deal; and yet, as we grow old and unbeautiful, the thought of endless life, and endless youth, and endless love, and endless May helps to make grey hair and failing strength bearable. What was it I heard Rose singing last night? Something of the same kind—some Methodist hymn about endless spring:

"There everlasting spring abides
And never fading flowers."

"Yes, everlasting spring would bring endless May, but I wish they would not now sing about it, the music interferes, I cannot write my letter, and if madame is not immediately informed of the marriage she will be offended." Yet she did not silence the music. She understood that for the lovers the world was just then revolving in Paradise, and that music is the language of Paradise. So she erased, and wrote over, and finally finished with an apology for all her mistakes.

Very soon the judge returned, and when he had lit his pipe he called Leonard to join him; and they sat down together and talked of their intended voyage. "It is a purely business visit to England as far as I am concerned," said the judge, "but we intend to be seen and to see; for there are many Americans in London at present, and with some of them I am familiar. May I ask, Leonard, what is taking you across the Atlantic at this time? Is Sappha entirely accountable?"

"Not quite, sir," Leonard answered. "Sooner or later this year I must have gone to Scotland to fulfil my father's last charge to me." No one questioned this remark, and Leonard continued: "After the defeat at Sheriffmuir my great-grandfather found himself on the brink of ruin. His clan had virtually perished, and he had given his last sovereign to *The Cause.* Emigration was all that remained and he was the more eager for this outlet when he learned that his name was on the list of the proscribed chiefs, and his life in danger. He went to the Earl of Moray, who had not been 'out,' and sold his estate to him on these conditions: To the third generation it was to be redeemable; but if not then ransomed it might be sold, though only to a purchaser bearing the name of Murray. My father hoped to be the saviour of the place, but he died before the investments made for this purpose had grown to sufficient increase. On his deathbed he solemnly left this duty to my management; and I vowed to him to fulfil every obligation to the last tittle. I now find myself able to honour my pledge, and I am going to Scotland to do it."

"That is right," said the judge. "Where is this estate?"

"In the Highlands of Scotland, north of Inverness. It is a romantic country, and I expect great pleasure from the journey; especially as I hope now that Sappha may go with

with me; but we can decide that question when we are closer to it."

"Certainly. You intend then to buy back the estate? Will that be of any advantage to you?"

"Not financially—just yet. But I have great faith in the future of land."

"What will you do with it? Rent it?"

"No. The few Murrays yet remaining there would resent a stranger over them. I shall leave the oldest of the clan guardian of the place. The land will not run away. The house is built of immense blocks of granite, and may stand a thousand years. In time I shall find a profitable use for both house and land—one can always trust land."

This subject naturally brought to discussion a home in New York, and the judge said, "As the Government House is on the point of being pulled down, I shall buy a lot on the south of the Bowling Green and build a handsome dwelling on it for Sapphira. Like you, Leonard, I have faith in land. When this part of the city ceases to be socially desirable it will become commercially valuable; and commerce pays good rentage."

It was near midnight when all subjects growing out of this sudden change of intentions had been discussed; and the days that followed were days of hurry and happiness. But every one entered so heartily into the joyful girl's marriage that nothing was belated or neglected, and on the evening before the desired day there was time for all to sit down and arrange the final ceremonies. It was then that Leonard put into Sappha's hand, as he bid her good-night, the beauteous gift which is yet worn by her great-granddaughter. With a kiss and a blessing he put it into her hand, and she took it into the lighted parlour to examine. It was addressed only

"To Sapphira, Sapphires,"

and when the cover of the box was removed she discovered a necklace of those exquisite Asteria sapphires which have in the centre of their heavenly blue opalescence a star of six rays. The judge had already seen them. He said Leonard had bought them from a Creole jeweller in New Orleans, and that they had once belonged to a beautiful princess of Ceylon.

But whatever their history, never had they clasped the throat of a lovelier woman than Sapphira Bloommaert on the day of her wedding. The little company invited were gathered in the ordinary sitting-room of her father's house, but the June sunshine flooded gloriously the homelike place; and Annette, who had been freely forgiven, had made it a bower of white roses. On the hearthstone stood the domine, and the bride's mother and grandmother were on either side of him. Mr. and Mrs. Livingston, Mr. and Mrs. Morris, Annette and Achille, Peter and his betrothed, Josette Genaud, were the witnesses.

It was on her father's arm the lovely Sapphira entered. Every one instinctively felt her approach; conversation ceased, laughter was hushed, all were at pleased attention when they heard the light footsteps and the gentle rustling of the silk wedding gown. A kind of radiance came in with her; came from her tall bright beauty, from the glow in her eyes, from her fresh, sweet face, from the warm lights about her shining hair, and the scintillating glory of the gems around her white neck. In her hand she held a perfect white rose, and either of design or by some fortunate accident she stood exactly on the spot where she had parted from Leonard with the rejected, scattered rose between them. But true love knows not rejection; from the ends of the earth it returns to its own; it cannot retain a memory of offence for ever and ever; it not only gives, but forgives.

Three hours after the ceremony the Bloommaert household were on their way to England, and Peter had charge of the house on the Bowling Green. "We shall be back in the fall of the year," the judge said to his son, "for I have much to attend to in New York this coming winter."

The judge kept his promise, but Leonard and Sappha did not return with him. Sappha had accompanied her husband to Scotland, and after his mission to the Highlands had been accomplished they lingered a while in Edinburgh. Here they met an old acquaintance who was going to Holland and Belgium, and they went with him to these countries. Then, the wander-fever being still upon Leonard, they travelled southward to France and Italy, returning to England by the usual tourist route through Switzerland. And, as at that day the facilities for travel were small, and its difficulties and hindrances for travel many and perplexing, it was more than a year before they again reached London, and turned their faces westward and homeward.

Homeward! The word tasted sweet in Sappha's mouth. She said it over and over, and the first sight of the open arms of the low-lying American shore brought happy tears to her eyes. The Bowling Green at last! After so many strange lands, after so many wonderful days in the old, old world, here was the fresh young world, with all its splendid hopes again! The flag they loved, the homes they knew, the people who belonged to them—these things were best of all; dearest of all were the contentful sum of all their future hopes and desires. The great cities, the fairest spots in Europe, were now only as picture books and memories; but Home, Sweet Home was on Bowling Green.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Afterward

IF any of my readers believe marriage to be the completion and consummation of individual life, they will be willing to consider the story of Sapphira finished when she married Leonard Murray. But if they rather believe it to be the open portal to a grander and wider life, they will find the few following pages a sufficient index to a future which they can unfold and amplify from their own knowledge and experience. So that I need only say that when Sapphira Murray entered the beautiful home which her father built for her on the south side of the Bowling Green she could have had no dream of its future destiny. She dwelt there in sweet contentment for many years, and died in its lofty front chamber just before the war of 1860. Leonard Murray did not long survive his beloved wife. He wandered disconsolately around the Green, or strolled slowly in the Battery Park for a few months, and was then laid beside her in that aristocratic little graveyard on Second Street, which, though surrounded by the tumult of the city, keeps to this day its flowery seclusion.

With the removal of these well-known figures the Bowling Green suffered a distinct social loss; and when Stephen Whitney, who was a near neighbour of the Murrays, died in 1861, the prestige of its wealth departed, for Mr. Whitney was the richest man in New York, with the exception of some members of the Astor family. From that date the Bowling Green began to assume a business character, and the homes of the Bloommaerts and Murrays no longer sheltered their descendants. Lawrence Bloommaert, the son of Captain Christopher Bloommaert, remained a while in the house of his grandfather, Judge Gerardus Bloommaert, but his family were all girls, and they married and scattered through the Madison Square district, and even still further north. Leonard and Sapphira's three sons had fine homes in the Murray Hill locality, and their only daughter Sapphira, who had married the eldest son of Peter Bloommaert, was in 189— living in a spacious mansion on the Riverside Drive. She was born in 1827, and therefore at the period of these reminiscences nearing seventy years of age. But she still kept the dew of her youth, and her children and children's children filled her splendid home with the living splendour of youth and beauty and affection.

She was sitting alone one night in the fall of 189—. She looked a little weary, her figure drooped slightly, her hands lay as motionless as if they were asleep; but there was a flush of excitement on her cheeks, and her eyes were full of dreams. She was seeing with them, but seeing nothing within their physical horizon. They had backward vision at this hour, and she smiled faintly at the scenes they flashed before her memory.

In a short time the door was nosielessly opened, and a much younger woman entered. She came toward the elder one with a slow, easy grace, and taking her passive hands between her own said: "Mother, you have wearied yourself. I fear you have been foolish to-day."

"No, no, Carlita," was the quick response. "I have had a happy day. I am glad I took my desire. I did not expect you. It is a *Faust* night; why are you not at the opera?"

"The opera will not miss me. Gerard has gone with the little Van Sant girl; and of course Agatha Van Sant will be present. I do not suppose the conductor would lift his baton until he saw Mrs. Agatha Van Sant enter her box; then, he would nod his satisfaction, and say with a lordly air, 'Let the opera commence.' I shall see enough of opera this winter; and I want so much to hear about your expedition. What time did you start?"

"About eleven o'clock. Gerard wanted to go with me, but I wished to be alone. There was really no danger. Dalby knows the city, and the horses obey his word or touch. I went to my old home. I was in every room of it."

"It must be much changed."

"In accidentals, yes, very much changed; but the large sunny rooms and the grand seaward outlook are the same. I went first to the nursery on the top story, and, Carlita, I could replace every chair and table. I could see James and

Leonard and Auguste busy with their books and playthings; and there was one back window that had a little embrasure, which was very dear and familiar to me. In that nook I read 'Robinson Crusoe,' and the 'Exiles of Siberia,' and best of all, 'The Arabian Nights.' I sat down there and tried to recall the long, long, happy days in which it was my favourite retreat. I stood and looked downward over the balustrade, and fancied I saw again my beautiful mother, clothed in white and sparkling with gems, going out with father to some dinner or ball; and I remembered how I used to thus watch for her coming, and call her; and how she would stand still and lift her face full of love and smiles to bid me a 'good-night.' Once at a little ceremony of this kind I dropped her a white rose, and she put it in her bosom, and my father laughed and called me 'darling' and I went to bed that night more happy than I can tell you. I stayed some time in the nursery, and longer in my mother's room. It had only sweet memories, for I never went into it without meeting a smile, no, not even on that last day of her beautiful life, when she called us all to her side for the long farewell. She died, as I have often told you, singing. She had sung, more or less, all her life long; and she went away faintly and sweetly singing,

"'Hark, they whisper, angels say,
Sister spirit, come away;'

and after a pause, still more softly—

"'Tell me, my soul, can this be death?'

See, Carlita, I brought some sprays from the honeysuckle she planted on the seaward porch. Though November, it is in bloom. My father put flowers from this same vine in her hands after she was dead. It was a lovely, happy memory, Carlita. In a little sitting-room I found a window pane on which Annette St. Ange and my mother had written their names, enclosing them in a very perfect circle, and I brought the glass away with me. I could not bear to think that some stranger, in the destruction of the room, might perhaps tread the names beneath his feet."

"Grandmother must have loved Mrs. St. Ange?"

"They were close friends, especially after the disappearance of Mr. St. Agne."

"Mother, what was the meaning of that disappearance—death?"

"People generally spoke of it as death; but my father and mother knew better; and when Annette had passed beyond mortal care and suffering something occurred—I think the marriage of her granddaughter in Paris—that led my mother to tell me the truth. To-day, Carlita, I saw Annette St. Ange again, though not as I recollected her in life."

"What do you mean, mother?"

"I saw her picture; the one taken soon after her marriage, and in her marriage garments—I was at the Loan Exhibition."

"Oh, mother, why did you not wait for me to go with you?"

"Well, my dear, the bit of glass in my hand made me remember the exhibit; and as I had heard Gerard say the Van Sants were going to send some portraits, I suddenly resolved to visit the rooms and see if Annette St. Ange's was among them. And there I saw it—very conspicuously placed also; a wonderfully lovely presentment of a lovely girl."

"But was it like her?"

"It was not like the Mrs. St. Ange I remember. The portrait represented a fairylike beauty, dainty, exquisite, with the bluest eyes and the palest golden hair imaginable; an air of indefinable coquetry and grace; and a slight, girlish figure clothed in white from head to feet. But the Mrs. St. Ange that used to visit my mother was very different. She was always in black, her eyes were not pretty or expressive, her hair had lost all its glow, and her slight figure became round and heavy. She was also sad-looking. I do not recollect her smiling. She seemed full of care. Still there were points of resemblance, when you looked for them; and you may be sure the bright, lovely girl did not become the sad, hard-looking woman without many and long-continued trials."

"She ought not to have married a foreigner. They do not understand American women; and then one or the other goes to the wall."

"In the St. Ange case, it was Annette. Her husband was soft as velvet and hard as iron. In some way she lost her grip of the situation, and when men go one step beyond their right they go too far. He never said an impolite word to her; also, he ceased saying a loving word. She became afraid of him, nervous, diffident, and suspicious. He had only to remark in the blandest way that she was losing her fine manners, and she lost them. In his presence she did herself no justice. He looked critically at her, slightly shrugged his shoulders, and she was as awkward as he considered her. In five years no one would have known the once sarcastic, clever, authoritative Annette de Vries. She had subsided. She was forgotten; and she hardly knew how to frame a complaint of the way in which this condition had been brought about.

"Fortunately, she found some comfort in her house and her children, but Mr. St. Ange took no apparent interest in either. It was a lonely pleasure. He was disappointed because the three girls were not three boys. He spent very little time in his home, preferring one or other of the clubs of which he was a member."

"I think he was simply—a brute."

"Not quite that—he did not intend to be brutal. He had taken a distaste to Annette. My mother told me that in the days of their first acquaintance he had periods of this distaste; a kind of repulsion which was overcome by the fascination of her great physical beauty. But the physical beauty faded, lost its charm, and you can see, Carlita, what would then happen. But he was never rude or actively unkind; and in public he treated her with marked attention and respect. If Annette had complained, no one would have believed her; even her grandmother was sure in her heart that Annette had managed badly a very good man."

"Poor Annette, I am sorry for her."

"My mother was sorry for her. She understood. My mother, in matters of the heart, had a sort of clairvoyant perception; and she never would listen to any one who blamed Annette. This kind of life between Mr. St. Ange and his wife went on for nearly ten years; and then one day he reached home in a strangely excited condition. He said he had received a request, that was in reality a command, to return to France and look after the affairs of his family. He was going at once. He expected to be away at least a year. Annette made no objection, nor did she ask any questions about the business. She was quite aware that all inquiries would be answered only as it suited her husband's views. However, before he went he made over to her in the most absolute way every dollar he possessed, both in property and money. He said the ocean voyage was a life risk; that he had always been unfortunate at sea, and that he wished his wife to have no difficulty, in case of his death, in realising his fortune. He himself took nothing away but some changes of clothing. 'If he lived to reach Paris he would have no difficulty concerning money,' he said, 'and if not—the thing he had done was well done and only an act of justice.' And every one thought his conduct beautifully thoughtful and unselfish. He went away on a night tide, when no one was aware of his intention, and again people said, ' How considerate! ' and Annette affected to agree with them."

" Well, at least, she was clever. I should have done the same, mother. Did she really grieve at his departure? "

" No. She turned all her attention to her money affairs. One of her great troubles had been Achille's refusal to interfere in the management of her fortune; or even to permit her to make any change in its disposition, however profitable such change would be. 'Your most sensible grandfather De Vries invested your money, and neither you nor I can improve upon his financial foresight,' was the usual answer. But times had changed, and Annette knew well that her investments needed change of the most radical kind. She made them without a day's delay. She called to her assistance the son of the man who had been her grandfather's lawyer, and with his advice speedily nearly doubled her income. All that Achille had left her was closely secured in real estate, and she found in this business such pleasant satisfaction, that she regained much of her beauty and old-time spirit."

" She had thrown off the incubus, mother."

" Yes, and regained her self-appreciation. Her lawyer praised her financial insight, her friends praised her appearance, she took the reins of household management again, and held them with such strict method and discipline that her servants, from being the most idle and insolent in the city, became the most respectful and obedient."

"Did she ever talk of her husband?"

"She never spoke of him until the year which Mr. St. Ange had named as the period of his absence was more than over. No word of any kind had come to her, and she said to my father, that she expected none. Achille had told her he would be too busy to write letters, and that she must accept 'no news' to be 'good news.' But he had given her the address in Paris where she might write to him, if there occurred anything worth writing about. My father advised her to write and inquire as to the health and welfare of Mr. St. Ange, and the date of his probable return. Annette did so, and after the lapse of four months received a short note from the lawyer she had addressed, saying: 'The ship in which Monsieur St. Ange sailed from New York was lost in the Bay of Biscay, and all on board perished. It is possible, but not likely, that Monsieur St. Ange was picked up by some vessel, whose course would take her round the Cape to India or China, and thus prevent all intelligence reaching us for a year or two. Madame is advised to consider this probability, but not to place much hope upon it.'"

Carlita laughed scornfully, and her mother continued: "Annette took the information with a blank calmness; no one could tell what her feelings were. She continued her busy life for three more years, and then one day a fashionable gentleman, called Van Tienhoven, visited her. In the most guarded and respectful manner he told her that he had just returned from France; that while there he had, through the influence of powerful friends, visited the Court of Versailles several times, and that on two occasions he had seen there, in close attendance upon the King, Mr. St. Ange, or, he added, if not Mr. St. Ange, the most perfect duplicate of that gentleman that can be imagined. Annette preserved her composure until his confidence was closed, then gave it an unqualified denial. She told Van Tienhoven that St. Ange's lawyer had assured her of the death of her husband; and begged him not to give publicity to the suspicion that he still lived. She showed him how painful it must be to her, how unfortunate for her daughters, and she emphatically declared her own belief in Mr. St. Ange's death. He gave her his word of honour to observe strict silence on the subject; and the Van Tienhovens are all gentlemen. I have no doubt the promise of secrecy was kept.

" But Annette became restless and unhappy, and both her grandmother and my father advised her to go to Paris. She went, taking with her Jonaca, the eldest of her daughters, who had always been the favourite of St. Ange. In less than four months she was in New York again. She came back without Jonaca, and dressed in the most pronounced widow's costume. She said unequivocally that her husband was dead, and that she had left Jonaca at a fine Parisian school; her father's friends having strongly urged her to do so, promising to care well for the girl. No one had any right to doubt Annette's statement, but mother told me that from the first there was a doubt. It was undefined and unspoken, but it permeated society; and Annette soon felt it. One day after some particularly disagreeable incident, she came to my mother and told her what had occurred; and mother said, 'Dear, what does it matter? *You* know that Achille is dead, do you not?' And she answered in a sullen, angry way, 'Sapphira, he is as dead to me as if he lay at the bottom of the Bay of Biscay. There is no truer widow in all America than Annette St. Ange. And then she pulled the widow's veil from her bonnet, and the widow's cap from her head, and flung them with passionate scorn far from her. What confidence followed this act mother never fully told me; but I gathered from what she said that she had been compelled to give up Jonaca, who had been placed in a convent for proper education, and that the interview with her husband had been extremely painful. But he kissed her hand at the close of the negotiations, and he sent servants in magnificent livery to attend to her luggage and passports and all the other formalities of travel; and they waited on her as if she was a princess, until they saw her safely on board the American-bound vessel.

"Gradually I learned more of this domestic tragedy. Judge Bloommaert told my father and mother that Annette was in receipt of a large income from France. Later, I heard that the notes authenticating this income were signed by the Duc de Massareene. A few years later Jonaca St.

Ange was introduced to French society of the highest rank, and in about half a year we heard of her marriage to the Marquis de Lauvine. Annette was proud of the alliance, and announced it in all the New York newspapers."

"Now, mother, I begin to see how it is all the Van Sants go to Paris 'for their luck,' as they say."

"You see only in part. Annette never spoke plainly to any one, unless it was to my mother and her lawyer. Her second daughter, Clara, went to Paris in her fifteenth year, remained in the convent two years, and was then introduced to society by her sister, the Marquise de Lauvine. But Clara refused all French alliances; she had a child love for George Van Sant, and she came home and married him. The youngest daughter, Annette, also went to Paris, and returned home to marry Fayette Varian. Their children have all friends in Paris, and some Americans wonder at the way they succeed socially. To me it is no wonder. The de Massareenes and De Lauvines are sensible of their right, and rather proud of their rich American kindred."

"I understand now, mother, why the Van Sants and Varians still crown Annette St. Ange as the most remarkable of women."

"She was a remarkable woman. My father did not hesitate to say to my mother and self, that she had done wisely in accepting money in place of a very doubtful recognition. You see the marriage laws were uncertain to her, and she knew well if her husband was a Roman Catholic that circumstance alone might invalidate her own marriage."

"But was he a Roman Catholic?"

"Yes. Always had been, I suspect."

"Then I think he was very dishonourable, and——"

"We will not discuss that question. It involves too many of our own kindred. Madame Jonaca, her grandmother, her uncle, Judge Bloommaert, and her Grandfather de Vries ought perhaps not to have taken the young man's 'conformity' for reality. That is past. The atonement made was very real and lasting. Immediately on her return from Paris Annette bought a beautiful home, she had the finest horses and carriages in New York, and she brought from far and near the very best teachers for her daughters. But in spite of this apparent extravagance she kept a strict account of every expense, and made every dollar earn its fullest percentage. Besides which, she speculated wisely, and was fortunate in every money transaction she touched. The Van Sants owe to her prudence all the luxury they enjoy to-day. They do well to praise her. I was thinking of her bride picture, and of the sad, sombrely clothed woman I remembered, when you came into the room. And I had just come to the conclusion that her husband's withdrawal was a fortunate thing for Annette and her daughters."

"She gave up all for her children. She was a good woman."

"I do not believe she would have given up the crossing of a 't' if it had not been for her children. She had spirit enough to have fought every court in France,—when she was from under her husband's influence,—but motherhood was Annette's passion, and if the Van Sants and Varians knew Annette St. Ange's true story they would give hearty thanks and praise to the self-effacing woman who chose for them wealth and honour in America rather than a foreign nobility, with perhaps the bar sinister across it."

"I am going to take a good look at Annette St. Ange's picture to-morrow, mother. I have been rather worried lately at our Gerard's attentions to Clara Van Sant, but if she has any share in her grandmother's reticent, self-respecting, prudent, far-seeing nature, Gerard has my blessing. He can marry Clara to-morrow. What have you done with that square of glass, mother?"

"It is in my desk."

"I would have it fitted into one of the windows in your private sitting-room."

"Thank you for the suggestion, Carlita."

"I cannot help wondering at fate, or whatever you call the power that orders our lives. Here were two women brought up in the same kind of loving, orderly homes, and surrounded by just the same influences, and the marriage of one is a living tragedy, and the marriage of the other is a song of love. How did the difference come to pass?"

"There were personal reasons in both cases to account for the difference—if there was all the dissimilarity you suppose."

"Was there not?"

"No; my mother's song of love had discords, and often fell into the minor key. No one can tell in what particular way a man will try the heart of the woman that loves him. My dear father had some failings that might have made sorrow enough, but mother knew how to accept the discipline; and in some cases we are reaping the benefit this day, both of my father's foibles and my mother's wise acceptance of them."

"I have always believed Grandfather Murray to have been a nearly faultless man."

"Under some circumstances his failings would have been virtues; but when a man marries he assumes duties which are paramount, and which demand a sacrifice of things in themselves innocent and even commendable. He had a love for travel, adventure, and even fighting, that at times became a hunger that must be satisfied; and these periods were often of long duration, and caused my mother infinite alarm and anxiety. I will only give you two instances, and these two, because they are prominent factors in our present life."

"One of them is, of course, Castle Murray in Scotland?"

"Yes. You know the story of its loss and redemption. But that was but the beginning. The old place seemed to draw father like a magnet, and he doubtless spent a great deal of money on its improvement; for he built additional rooms and inaugurated industries which I believe are still in progress."

"He was making the land valuable, mother. Was not that wise?"

"It did not look like wisdom to my anxious mother, and when my eldest brother James died it looked still less prudent. But my brother Alexander was then 'Murray of Castle Murray,' and he was as fanatic as his father and elder brother had been. His son David was equally proud of the old grey walls, and you know how Gerard plumes himself on being heir to the place."

"Yes, I know; but, mother, the Scotch place is now a very distinctive and valuable property. You are as proud as any of us, when the newspapers announce 'Mr. Gerard Murray and a party of friends *en route* to Castle Murray, his ancestral home in the Scotch Highlands, for the shooting season.' And the years Gerard does not himself go there he rents the place for an almost incredible sum to some rich American or Englishman. I am sure we should miss the money, as well as the distinction, Murray Castle brings us if it was no longer ours. For my part, I think my Grandfather Murray did a very wise thing in buying back and renovating the old home. I do believe it will prove one of his best speculations."

"I do not doubt your faith, Carlita; and you must remember, I am now giving you instances of good results from your grandfather's wandering fever. For you know wherever he went the lust for land went with him. He had also the strangest instinct concerning its value. In some occult way he divined the fortune of land, just as some fishermen point out to the fleet of boats exactly where the school of herring swim, though no ripple on the water and no shimmer of the fish show to the ordinary eye—or, as I myself have seen, a man step out from his comrades and say 'You may dig here, there is water beneath our feet.' In some such way, your grandfather could pick out the corners of certain streets, and even plots and parcels of unplanted lands, as future desirable locations."

"I do wish, mother, such an instinct was hereditary, and that it had come my road."

"It was a special gift, and perhaps was allied to the second-sight that was not uncommon among his people. I was going to tell you that about 1850 he went to New Orleans. He had property there, and always kept it, my mother thought, because it gave him a plausible excuse for a journey when he could find no other. Well, on this journey he met, in New Orleans, General Sam Houston. The two men loved each other on sight, and your grandfather went back with him to Texas. He was infatuated with the country. He wrote mother the most extravagant love letters, all inspired by the skies, and the prairies, the wonderful sunshine, the intoxicating atmosphere, and the seas of flowers nodding, even at his bridle reins. And my dear mother affected an equal enthusiasm; she told him to enjoy the trip in all its fulness—not to hurry home. She assured him all was well—and that she was able to manage affairs a little longer without him."

" I suppose she knew that he would stay until the fever of wandering had exhausted itself? "

" Perhaps she did; but even if so, her sympathy made him more happy. He remained in Texas nearly a year, and, of course, bought land there. Some of this land has been very advantageously turned into cash; but there was one tract he would never part with. To be sure, no one seemed to want it; and I have heard Texans who came to our house—where they were always welcome—ask him what motive he had in buying land so valueless. He always laughed a little, and said, ' It was a fancy of his.' Then *they* would laugh, and tell him that ' he was rich enough to buy a fancy.' All the same, it was easy to see they thought either that my father had been cheated or else that he was a mighty poor judge of land and localities. But nothing altered his opinion of the Texas property, and he took a promise both from my brothers and myself that we would not sell it for fifty years. Well, Carlita, you know how it turned out? "

" Mother! You mean the oil lands? Good gracious! How could grandfather know? There was no oil found below ground in his day—how could he know? "

" So you see, though mother had these periods of loneliness and trial, *we* are reaping their harvest; and I am sure she is glad of it."

" Grandfather was a strange ' mixture of the elements '; so shrewd and worldly-wise, and yet so romantic."

" You may add sentiment to the romance. When he first entered Castle Murray he saw it exactly as it had been left. No one had touched anything. The old chief's chair, as he pushed it from the table when he had eaten his last meal in the home he was leaving, remained just at the angle taken; a half-bottle of usquebaugh and an unbroken glass stood on the bare oak table. The dust of generations lay an inch thick, and on the hearthstone were a few remnants of half-burnt wood. These remnants your grandfather carefully gathered, and when the first fire in the Bowling Green house was lit they kindled it. But no one who ever saw Leonard Murray buying or selling land would have dreamed that he had room in his heart for a bit of sentiment like that."

" I have heard him called a shrewd, hard man."

" I know. Listen again. You have complained of the superabundance of white roses at our old country home up the river? "

" Well, mother, they are absurdly out of proportion. They cover walls and fences and over-run the garden, and ought to give place, in part, to other flowers."

" Not while I live. My mother and father carefully reared the first growth from the seeds of one white rose, which in some way was vitally connected with their love. There was a quarrel, and my mother rejected the rose; and father kept it, and then after they were married they planted the seed, and watched and nourished it, until it became a tree bearing white roses. From slips of that tree the garden has been garlanded with roses. I do not wish it changed, until you have put the last earthly rose in my cold hands."

"Dear mother! Dear mother!"

They talked over these incidents until Gerard returned; and then as they took some slight refreshment together fell into speculations concerning the past and present Bowling Green. Gerard was sympathetic with its past, but enthusiastic as to its future. And when Mrs. Bloommaert spoke feelingly of the dignified men who in early days had been the familiar figures on its pleasant sidewalks, Gerard answered:

"Dear auntie, these dignified old merchants in breeches and beavers and fine lawn ruffles have most worthy successors in the clean-shaved men of to-day, sensibly clothed from their soft hats to their comfortably low-cut shoes. Would it not be delightful to show some of these old, dignified merchants over the new Bowling Green? Take them through Nassau Street and way up Broadway? I think they would need all the training they have been having since they died to bear it."

"You ought not to speak so lightly of the future life, Gerard."

"Auntie, your pardon! But do you think that only the incarnated improve? May not the de-incarnated be progressing also?"

"Of that condition I have no knowledge; but we all know that the first builders of New York had the hard part. They laid the foundation of all that has been done."

"All right, aunt; but the men of to-day have built well and loftily on their foundation. If they could see the Bowling Green to-day, and the magnificent commercial city of which it is the centre—if they could see the elevated roads, the motor cars, the railways, telegraphs, and ocean cable service and all the rest of our business facilities, I am sure they would have no words for their astonishment and delight."

"Well, children, I have lived a long time to-day. I belong to the—past. I am tired. Good-night, Gerard."

"Good-night, aunt. Dream of the past, but be sure that however enterprising, energetic, patriotic, and far-seeing those old-time New Yorkers were, there is just as much enterprise and energy, just as much patriotism and prudence, with the New Yorkers of to-day, for

"The bold brave heart of New York
Still beats on the Bowling Green!"

THE END